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THE HOLY LAND.





THE
HOLY LAND.

BY
WILLIAM HEPWORTH DIXON.

With Illustrations from Original Drawings and Photographs.

FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:
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LONDON . PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET
AND CHARING CROSS.

TO
THE HON. FREDERICK WALPOLE,

THIS PICTURE OF A COUNTRY

WHICH HE KNOWS SO WELL

IS INSCRIBED

BY HIS FRIEND,

W. H. D.

PREFACE.

THESE studies of the Scenery and Politics of the Sacred Story were made in the Holy Land—in the tent, the saddle, and the wayside khan—and were sent home from Palestine, not as chapters of a book, but as Notes for a few fireside friends. In offering them to the public, I renounce the dream of instructing scholars in their craft ; avoid dogma as beyond the province of a lay writer ; and leave controversy for the most part to critics. My aim is to afford the untravelled reader a little help in figuring to himself the country and the events which occupy so many of his thoughts.

In reading my camp Bible (with the help of Philo and Josephus), on the spots which it describes so well, I was surprised to find how much good history lies overlooked in that vast treasury of truth. My book is a picture of what I then saw and read. Hardy speculators will decry some of

my views as conservative ; but I leave my results with the reader, under a sure conviction that unless they are found to be true in the main they will very soon perish out of men's thoughts.

A few errors of the press have been corrected in this edition, but no considerable change has been made in the text.

*St. James's Terrace,
December, 1867.*

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English Church at Lydda.	Photo. by GRAHAM	„	„

THE HOLY LAND.

CHAPTER I.

OFF JAFFA.

PLASH goes the anchor !

“Port?” cries a voice from the berth under mine in the smart ship *Il Vapore*, an Austrian boat, with a Ragusan captain, a Smyrniote crew, and an Italian name. In less than a pulse of time, a head is butting against the pane of glass which serves to let in light and keep out drench.

Yes : port. The light of dawn is opening on a long dark line of hills, standing back about eighteen miles from the shore ; the stars are filming out of sight ; the sky is paling to a thin blue ; and a grey sea goes lapping and parting round the keel with a sullen sough, except in our front, towards the land, where it appears to rise and cream over a rugged wall of rocks. High above the rugged rocks and whitening surge stands a cone of houses—a town, having a low-lying beach, dark walls, and on either side of these walls a clump of wood.

It is the Holy Land on which we gaze :—the country of Jacob and David, of Rachel and Ruth ; the scene of our sweetest fancies, of our childish prayers, and of our household psalms. Among yon hills the prophets of Israel taught and the Saviour of all men lived and died ; that stony hillock of a town is the Joppa to which Hiram sent the

cedar wood ; this roadstead is the port from which Jonah sailed on his tempestuous voyage ; down by the shore to the south hides the flat roof on which it is said that Peter slept. The stretch of sand, with its dunes and crests blown over from the Nile, tricked here and there by a palm, a fig-tree, a pomegranate, is the fore-part of that plain of Sharon on which all the roses of imagination bloom and shed their scent. Yon towering chain of earth—dark, swelling, ridge-like—flushing into pink and amber, growing out into your grasp as you stand peering towards it, is that mountain home of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, which boasts of having Hebron, Zion, Bethel, and Gerizim for its most eminent and most holy peaks.

Priests, soldiers, laymen, pilgrims are astir in the saloon ; in the dim nooks of which a Turkish effendi is kneeling at his prayers, a Moldavian papa is making love to a fair sinner, a French author appears to be copying facts from a guide-book into his own, and a Saxon seems bent on filching a pint of fresh water for his difficult morning bath. Young men who have no time to wash—having to land in less than five hours—are twisting cigarettes for the day. Young women are wisping up those hoops of steel which are soon to become a burden in the saddle, if not a danger in the fierce Syrian sun. Nearly all our guests of the cabin are roaring for their boots, their coats, their coffee, their pipes ; but they are roaring to no end, for the steward of *Il Vapore* is—asleep.

Our steward is a genuine Oriental in a place of trust. Oil is not softer, air not more buoyant, than his spirits. No noise disturbs him ; no sarcasm stings him ; no shout, no threat ever ruffles the calm good-nature of his smiling face. For one who smokes in bed and breaks his fast on pickles, he has a roundness in his cheek, a music in his laugh, which tell you he belongs to that happy band of men whose dreams agree with them. Ring and rave as you list, this easy man, snug in his sheets, will not only forgive the noise you make, but take no eager and unkindly notice of your

passion of tongue and feet. Why should he? Does he not send you a cup of tea at seven; serve up a meal of sardines, pickles, and uncooked swine at eight; indulge you with a refresher of rusk and cheese, and a dash of cognac in your drink about the hour of noon; provide a table of twelve good dishes and one poor wine (some old Pomard in a bin—as an extra fare) at four; make tea for you at eight; produce a kettle, a lemon, and a familiar spirit about nine; amuse you with chess and books, and put out your lamp at ten? What more would you have? Such is your bill of the feast. Nothing can be added, nothing can be changed, unless (a word in your ear, Eccellenza) you would like to arrange with him for some acts of friendship by a private tip. A steward who does his duty from seven in the morning until ten at night should not be disturbed in his dreams, except by the chink of zwanzigers and francs.

You pay ten pounds at an office:—for which sum of money you are lodged and fed while being carried in the steamer from port to port. It is cheap; being less than the cost of bed and board on land; but when you have paid ten pounds to Il Vapore's owners, their steward is still your lord. Pay ten francs more in the shape of vails, and he becomes your slave. Is it not worth the price? For tenpence a day, dropt deftly into the proper palm, you may buy this ship and all its uses. One small coin makes you lord of everything on board; of the pantry, the kitchen, and the cellar; of the cherry sticks, the jebilé, and the easy chairs; of the books, the piano, the chess-board, and the ship charts; of the telescope, the soda-water, and the freshly-frozen snow. Pay down that fee, and you shall dine in the highest seat, go ashore in the captain's gig, enjoy the first peep at journals, sleep in the best berth, and when the company is scant have a cabin to yourself.

The sun, coming up over the ridge of Ephraim, is gilding and purpling the mountain range from Ramah to Carmel. Solomon must have seen this chain of heights in some such

morning glow, when, in his Arab delight in colour, he exclaimed to his darling Shulamite—

Thine head upon thee is like Carmel,
And the hair of thine head like purple.

Moving through the crowd of Arab sheikhs, Frank pilgrims, Nilotic slaves, Greek traders, and Armenian priests—this motley of all creeds and nations, which adorns and cumberes the quarter-deck—two figures seem to stand from the rank as types of East and West. The first is a fat young fellow, dressed in a white turban, a yellow cloak, and a scarlet band; the second is an aged lady, in a black gown without hoop, and a dark straw hat.

Hassan (if his name be Hassan), a Cairene trader, suddenly puffed out with cotton, finding himself rich in paras and high in flesh, has been to Galata, where rosy cheeks and brilliant eyes may still be bought by true believers from the Italian merchants; and in that suburb of the splendid city he has purchased comfort for his age in the shape of four plump wives. The rewards of virtue and a good crop are penned amidships, in a cabin of four berths, under lock and key, while Hassan reclines on his bit of red carpet at their prison door. Night and day he there holds watch and ward. To be sure that none of the crew shall see his hareem, he waits on them himself; like a slave he fetches them bread and fruit; prepares and lights their pipes; fills and removes the water jars; and, after his long and earnest evening prayer, lies down on his mat across the opening of their berths. It is pleasant to watch the white turban bobbing in among its beauties, and on the sound of a Frank footfall, to see its pursy little owner slamming the door and twisting the hasp on his gazelles.

This happy man has paid for a berth of his own, opening on that state-room in which lemons and hot water are produced about the time of rest: but the lightness of his charge sits heavy on his soul; and when night comes down upon him, and sleep ought to close his lids, he has to mount

guard over his fair mischief ; distrusting that holy verse of the Koran which tells him that when the sun has gone down into the sea—

All is peace until the breaking of the morn.

In spite of much flesh, and of the good spirits which should attend on flesh, he seems haunted by the dread lest four such darlings, all young, all fat, all new to the world and its ways, must fall into peril, even behind bolts and bars. Happy little wretch ! He has spent many piastres on the desire of his heart ; on that which is the desire of every Oriental heart ; yet he dares not sleep. Munching apples all day, smoking jebilé all night, he frets and pines, his shadow falls less and less ; and it is an open question with the crew how long he may live to enjoy the consolations he has bought. At present his share of the world seems hard to bear.

With Marie, the aged lady, a missionary, and the wife of a missionary, there is not a man on board who is not in love. When age is lovely, it is supreme in loveliness. This dame, a Swiss and not mercenary, a Genevese and yet comely, has spent thirty of her best years among Dyaks and Malays ; humbly and hopefully striving, in a far off corner of the globe, to win over a few dark souls to God. After thirty years of toil she asked for a little rest ; came home to her own bright lake ; and having kissed old friends, and wept over many graves, she is carrying her white hair and her brave spirit back to that sultry field of labour ; knowing that she will see her home among the vines, her Alps and streams, the companions of her youth, the graves of her people, no more—no, never more. The rest of her life is given up to God. On her way back to the Indian ocean, she is going up the Wady Aly to Bethlehem and Jerusalem, that her last thoughts of a hemisphere she is quitting for ever may be connected with her Saviour's cradle and her Saviour's tomb.

May peace go with her in this sacred toil ! I am able to

give her an olive twig and a few wild flowers from the valley of Nazareth. She says they will be a sign and a comfort to her under a southern sun, and perhaps may be laid upon her shroud when she has done her duty and gained her rest.

The town has now crept into light. Two or three flags are drooping in the air, and a mob of boats comes paddling through a slit in those rocks over which the surf keeps creaming high and white. Strong Arab rowers pull deep and hard; tall fellows, with bare black arms, small heads, and lustrous eyes; clothed in a loose sack or shirt, perhaps bound at the waist by a belt, perhaps not; an easy, inexpensive costume, apt to many uses, though inclined to misbehave itself, in English eyes, as a mere article of dress.

Skimming along the brine like birds, huddling upon each other, the light Arab canoes dance and dip round the companion ladder, while the dark men who handle them grin and chatter and display their teeth. They have plenty of leisure to joke and beg, for the day is still young, though the heat is stifling, and the people of Jaffa are in no great hurry with their morning meal. You spend two or three hours in buying oranges from one boat, throwing jebilé into a second, salaaming to a sheikh in a third. Then a barge slips alongside, and a smart young man in a Syrian accent and a London coat bids us welcome to his house and to the East. A brief exchange of civilities and cigarettes, and we step into his barge, squat down under the red cross, kiss hands to our fair friends on board, and feel the waves slip away from beneath our keel.

As we near that wall of rock, one of the dirtiest bits of reef in the world, the crests of foam break high above its top and cover it from our sight. Hot and blinding glares the sun; the slit is about twelve yards wide; and to miss it as we roll through the breakers in our tiny shell would be instant death. Our Arabs draw with an easy confident stroke, in part the effect of skill, in part of fate. What cares Abdallah for yon reef of rock? Is it sharper than

the bridge of Sirat, over which he must one day march?
And what if he should fail to strike the gap?

For the pious there is a place of bliss ;
Gardens and vineyards girt with walls,
And damsels with high bosoms, ever young ;
And a full cup.

Why, then, should a believer quake? Are yon groves of
myrtle more delicious than the gardens of Paradise? Can
his homely hareem vie with the celestial houris? For him,
to die is to live—and, praise be to Allah, he knows no fear.

CHAPTER II.

MOHAMMEDAN JAFFA.

JAFFA can boast a wall, a port, a bazaar, a convent of each rite, a soap-mill, a couple of gates, ten guns, three mosques, six consuls, two Jewish converts, a pasha, an orange-grove—all of which sounds soft and homely to a reader of the Bible and the Arabian Nights—the two books from which nearly all of us learn the little that we know in our youth of the Morning Land. Yet Mohammedan Jaffa is a town in the last degree new and strange to a Frank.

Jaffa is the genuine East; a town in which all that is dark and bright in the Syrian genius seem to have met.

It is not only that here, in Jaffa, the churches are mosques, the pumps are fountains, the streets are tunnels, the men are brown and the women veiled; for all these forms and signs which belong to a comparatively rainless zone may be found from Cairo on the Nile to Beyrout on the sea. Jaffa is a city of ancient type. Though the oldest houses are not more ancient than those of Soho Square, yet, unlike cities which have been made the toys of kings, it has undergone no change since the remotest times. Destroyed in war, rebuilt in peace, it has remained the same in aspect and in site—in the days of Solomon and Pompey, of Saladin and Napoleon, of Mohammed Ali and Abdul Aziz—a town on a hill, on a cape jutting out into the waves; built up like a cone, house rising upon house to a central peak; having a bad roadstead in its

front, and a magnificent orange-grove in its rear. Though Jaffa is the chief town of a rich district, it has no streets, no sewers, no markets, no shops. Though it has always been the sea gate of Jerusalem, it has no docks, no quays, no jetties, no landing-stairs, no lights. No road leads into it, not even by the open ways of the sea. A steamer may now and then stand off the town a mile or more from the rocks ; but she will only come thus near when the winds are low and the waters calm. A puff of storm from the west or south warns the sailor away from this perilous coast, and for week after week of bad weather the place is cut off from communication with the world. The open sea is not open to Jaffa. On the land side, fields creep close to the walls, and sand drifts in at the gates. Beyond the line of wall spreads the great plain ; a film of creamy-pink sand lying on a bed of black loam, here and there dotted by Bedaween tents and by ruined towns once bright in song and story, though they have passed away, leaving little behind them on the plain except mounds and graves.

Leaning on the roof-screen of a house, having the hills in front, the sea behind, you may range over the fields of Lydda, a town in which St. Peter healed Eneas, in which St. George was born, and about which Lion-Heart pitched his tents. To the south stands Ramleh in the sands, with its great cistern, its famous convent, and its beautiful tower of the White Mosque. Beyond Ramleh, at the mountain base, and out of ken, stands the hill of Modin, the princely seat of Simon Maccabeus. Still more to the south, among the drifts and dunes, spring the minarets of Gaza and Ashdod, and near these living cities crouch the ruins of that Askalon in which Herod the Great was born. In the rear of these places, through the region in which Samson caught the foxes and David fought with the giant, corn lands and pastures roll with a waving undulation to the mountain chain.

Falling back on the space round Jaffa, you perceive that not a house clings fondly to the rampart, not a flight of

steps weds the country with the town. Through a single gateway, which is barred at night, the great tides of landward life and commerce have to ebb and flow. A ditch, a market, a few wells and graves, lie beyond this portal, making an oriental suburb; in the daytime busy with crowds and gay with colours, but from sundown to sunrise a place of ghosts, untenanted save by ravening vultures and more savage dogs. In a white field, fenced round by brambles and prickly pears, lie the ashes of a hundred generations of men—Philistines, Hebrews, Macedonians, Saracens, Franks, and Turks.

As a city, Mohammedan Jaffa is hot, sad, silent, and forlorn. The crow of a child, the snarl of a cur, the coo of a bird, the song of a muezzin calling on the faithful to come and pray, will sometimes startle and charm your ear; the quick gleam of a lance, the plumage of a bird, the white veil of a lady, may enchant your eye. In the evening, when the fresh dew is on the leaves, and the wind breathes softly through the groves, your nostril may be visited by a rare delight, caught up from myrtles, oranges, and limes. Still, Jaffa as a city, is close and sad: not so the gateway and market-place beyond the wall.

This gate, the Jerusalem Gate—has a weird and magic beauty, borrowed in spirit from the Nile: a lofty arch, a noble tower, well flanked by the city walls, a Saracenic fountain, with jets of water flowing into marble troughs, over which a pious verse from the Koran is printed in golden type. In a nook close by, an old sheikh keeps a cuttab or infant school, in which for a piastre a week, and a bit of white muslin and a pair of slippers, given to him once a year from the mosque, he teaches the youth of Jaffa to chant their sacred suras hilariously out of tune. In the gateway itself sits the *cadi*, judging causes in the presence of donkey boys, fellaheen, and Franks. This man is fined, that man is flogged; but there is little noise in the court, no bill of exceptions, and no thought of an appeal. The heat makes every one grave; the very soldiers on guard

are dawdling over pipes, and the collectors of duty are dozing in the shade.

Some steps beyond the Jerusalem Gate, between the town ditch and the orange gardens, lies the suburb, in which a kind of fair is held the whole year round ; busiest when the maize is being garnered and the fruit is ripe. It is held on the open and sandy plain, among a scatter of booths and sheds, some of them raised on poles and covered in with mats, while others are built of reeds stuck lightly into the soil, laced in and out with twigs, and tiled with boughs and leaves. A house on the left is of planks ; one large hut, used for a café and exchange, has a wooden frame ; but most of these booths are made of canvas stretched upon a frame of poles. Near the great tank, in which, when you go to drink water, you may happen to find a camel lapping, an Arab bathing, and a girl filling jars for domestic use, stands a house of stone and mud, a sort of pound, in which a sheikh who dares not ride into the town may stable his mare. Under the light roofs of these sheds a merchant buys and sells ; a barber tells stories and shaves Moslem heads ; a muleteer munches his black crust ; a wayfarer breathes his hookah, paying a para for his jebilé and fire ; an Arab haggles over the price of a carbine, a length of cotton, an Indian bamboo ; a donkey-boy sucks his bit of sweet cane ; a famished negro gobbles up his mess of oil and herbs. All these men of swarthy race ; some of them sheikhs from the desert, some of them slaves from Cairo and the Soudan ; all bearded and bare-legged ; these wearing armlets and earrings, those wearing green shawls or turbans, a sign of their saintly rank ; plod ankle-deep in the sand, each grain of which is hot as though it had been swept from a furnace to their feet. Piled up around them are heaps of fruit, such as very few gardens of this earth can match. Grapes, oranges, tomatoes, Syrian apples, enchant the eye with colour. Figs, peaches, bananas, imprison the sunshine of summer days. Plums dazzle you with bloom. What mounds of dates, what

mountains of melons ! And through all these crowds of men, through all these lanes of fruit, winds the track of the camel and the ass, the pilgrim and the monk, the pasha and the prior, from whatever point of the compass they may chance to come. And so it has always been, and always must be, in this suburb of the Jerusalem Gate. Dorcas bought fruit in this market, drew water at yon well. St. Peter walked in from Lydda along this sandy path. Pompey, Saladin, Napoleon, rode through this litter of sheds and stalls.

The second gate of Jaffa, the Water Gate, faces the sea. Not so big as the land gate, which admits a camel with a load of maize on his hunch, this gate is no more than a slit or window in the wall, about six feet square, just level with the ground, and about five feet higher than the sea line when the wind is hushed and the water still. A breeze from the west frisks foam into the doorway, blinding the aga on duty, drenching the poor donkeys, preventing the porters from either loading or unloading boats. Through this small cutting in the rampart everything coming into Palestine from the west—from France and England, from Egypt and Turkey, from Italy and Greece—must be hoisted from the canoes ; such articles as pashas, bitter beer, cotton cloth, negroes, antiquaries, dervishes, spurious coins and stones, monks, Muscovite bells, French clocks, English damsels and their hoops, Circassian slaves, converted Jews, and Bashi Bazouks ; hauled up from the canoes by strings of Arabs ; men using their arms for ropes, their fingers for grappling hooks, their scanty robe—a sack tied round the waist with a strap or sash—for a creel, a table, a kerchief, anything you please, except a covering for their limbs. In like manner, all waste and produce going out of the country for its good or evil—maize, oranges, dragomans, penitent friars, bananas, olives, soldiers on leave, Frank pilgrims, fakeers, consuls, deposed pashas—must be shot from that tiny porthole into the dancing boats, like Jonah into the sea. When a steamer hails in the road, this baling up, this

shooting out, of goods and men, goes on for hours at a stretch, to a manifest increase of the fun ; yet the aga and effendi in office, nay, the small boys of the port, seem all unconscious of the sport. One hot and idle day I had the pleasure of seeing a Seraskier's hareem hoisted out of boats into the town. If yon aga in the white turban and flowing skirt had been blessed with any sense of humour, he would have died of his duty, perhaps years ago.

Two or three summers since, when the Prince of Wales was riding through the Holy Land, a Moslem, proud of his country and jealous for his port, threw out a log jetty alongside of which the gig of a man-of-war might lie ; but when the Prince turned off from Judah into the hill country of Samaria, instead of dropping down into the plain of Sharon, as he had first proposed, the Syrian patriot chopped his jetty into firewood, and like a pious Moslem gave the splinters to the poor.

Mohammedan Jaffa runs no risk of being invaded by cabs and horses, not having a single street along which they could roll and race. In Stamboul you may hire an araba ; in Cairo you can call a fly ; but if you should wish to ride in Jaffa, you must either mount the hump of a camel or bestride the bones of an ass. A mule, a horse even, may be hired at the Jerusalem Gate ; but the hacks there found among the booths and sheds belong, not to the town and its people, but to Arab merchants who send out servants and slaves from place to place, just as they may chance to find pilgrims whom they can serve and cheat ; being one week in El Arish, another in Beyrout, a third at Damascus or Es Salt. No machine on wheels—no drag, coach, stage, gig, van, or barrow—has ever been known within these Jaffa walls. Every one goes on foot ; the lady in her veil, the priest in his robes, the peasant in his rags. Everything is carried on the back ; the camels being drays, the donkeys carts, the fallaheen trucks, in this primitive system of life and trade. Haroun might walk through yon gate into the fair and find nothing changed in the habits of his country-

men since the times when he and his trusty vizier wandered about the streets of his capital by night.

Watch this damsel in the pink robe and the long veil as she trips daintily along to market or bazaar. Is she Aminé? Are Safie and Zobeide in the house—yon house with the high wall, over which the palm tree throws its fronds? Passing through the arch, and raising a little corner of her veil, she beckons with a tiny dark hand to one of the porters dozing by the wall; the motion of her fingers saying to his eyes, "Pick up thy basket, O young man, and follow me." Gliding from stall to stall, she piles up his basket with bread and veal, with grapes and lemons, with violets and orange flowers, with sprigs of myrtle and eglantine; and then, with the young man at her heels, trips home to the house. Flitting past the fountain, and past the mosque, into a silent lane, the lady taps at a large door and enters into a courtyard. Here she is lost to sight, if not to conjecture. Will Safie open the door to that porter? Will Zobeide dazzle him with her beauty? Will the royal mendicants arrive at night, and Haroun himself drop in to enjoy the cheer and increase the mirth?

More likely is it that this sedate Aminé will prepare the evening meal for one nearer and more precious to her heart; so that when Abdallah, servant of the Lord, comes in from his toil in the city, in the field, in the port, she may set these dainties before him, and then kissing him on the mouth, and shedding on his spirit the light of her round black eyes, laugh when she sees that he eats of them and and that his soul is glad? Perhaps so; perhaps, too, she will sing for him that beautiful evening strain from the Koran:—

Have we not given you the earth for a bed,
And made you husband and wife,
And given you sleep for rest,
And made you a mantle of the night?

CHAPTER III.

MY ARAB MASTER.

“GOOD morning, Master !” says Yakoub, gliding softly into my cell, and using up in his first salutation all that he knows of English, with the sole reserve of some six or eight words of uncommon strength and flavour, much used by our sailors in the Levant, and perhaps elsewhere. Yakoub is my new master, whom I bought for myself in Stamboul ; paying him two hundred piastres a day for making me do what he pleases, go whither he likes, order the food he prefers, and ride behind him on the second-best mare. When he comes into the room, taking my hand reverently, he bows his head, as much as to say that his health is in my keeping ; but the rogue knows his place and power, and is laughing in his sleeve at this customary comedy of Arab life. Then, in a jargon which is meant to be English to a Saxon, French to a Gaul, Romaic to a Greek—a jargon that gave me some trouble when he first began to reign over me—he inquires whether we shall really set out to-day, seeing that more bad news is pouring in from Gaza, Nazareth, and Nabulus ? Yes, Yakoub ; let us mount and move. Have we not spent days in Jaffa, sucking oranges and munching grapes by the sea-shore, when we ought to have been climbing the hill of Modin, peering into the grotto of Bethlehem, and braving the heats of the Dead Sea ?

Sullen, incredulous, Yakoub hangs about the room ; takes

down my strong leathern belt; peeps into the barrel and tries the spring of my revolver; casts a covetous glance at my railway wrap (an innocent square of cotton wool, worked into the pattern of a tiger-skin); feels the weight of my hunting whip, which he playfully assures me has just bronze enough to crack a hyena's skull; ascertains by touch the sharpness of my English spurs; measures with his eye the quantity of my quinine, tea, cognac, powder and ball. Being satisfied that his slave possesses nearly everything that an Arab gentleman is likely to require on a journey, he drops into that *lingua Franca*, which, on a good deal of acquaintance, proves to consist mainly of the Italian of Genoa, dashed with the patois of Marseilles, a spice of seafaring Saxon, and some dirty bits of Greek.

"The mule shall be packed, Master. Ishmael has gone to find Saïd in the market-place. All ready by ten."

"What sort of nag shall I have to ride?"

"Very good mare, Master; Sabeah, child of the desert; very swift mare."

Saïd is my *mukari*; a man who either owns the horses on which you ride, or travels with them for another owner, and who feeds and curries them, and takes a general charge of your baggage on the road. Saïd is a Nubian, a negro, and a slave; and, like the mule and horses, is the property of an Arab gentleman not too proud to let his people and his beasts earn money by trade.

Ishmael is an Arab lad whom I have picked up in the fair. One day, when I was sitting under a screen, smoking a cigarette, an imp some twelve years old, with lustrous eyes, a swarthy skin, a soft Syrian face, ran up to me; a lad of pure Arab blood, sinewy and lithe, such a one, methought, as that youth whom the vizier's daughter loved. What a model he seemed for a painter of Ishmael!

"Want donkey?"

"What, you speak English!" say I, slipping, as I spoke, a piastre into his fist; at which he grinned and nodded, till his opening eyes seemed all in a blaze.

"Ya, ya ; me speak English. Me show consul, one more piastre."

"You sordid little Jew !"

"Me Jew !" fired the child. "Me Arab. My fader donkey boy. Me donkey boy. Very good donkey. Go hotel, go consul, go Ramleh, go Jerusalem ?"

"Would you go all that way ?"

"Me go Cairo, me go Damascus—plenty piastre, plenty piastre."

I felt a weakness for the wretch, endowed him with the name of Hagar's son, and hired him on the spot to be one of my fellow-subjects to Yakoub, whose rule his spirits and his antics may enable me to bear.

On his own showing, Yakoub is by birth an Arab, by profession a Christian ; but to which of the many branches of our Church he has brought the homage of his vices, who can pretend to say ? His religion is apparently like his language—a part of many, the whole of none ; for one sees that the man is striving, with a small and feline art, to be all things to all tribes and sects ; to the Italian a Catholic ; to the Russian a Greek ; to the Egyptian a Copt. To the English he would be a Protestant, but for the dread lest an attempt to claim spiritual kinship with an Oxonian or a Templar might result in his being thrashed. With a Bostonian, he would not scruple to profess himself an Evangelical convert—a brand plucked from the fire by an American Paul ; while, to the Londoner, whom he thinks likely to hate him as a Papist and to despise him as a Greek, he is sly enough to pass muster as a pupil of the more humble Maronite Church.

Apart from his dubious creed, Yakoub (if I may speak of him now as he will appear when we have come to know him worse) has something in him of the thief, the bully, and the sneak, though enjoying these Syrian qualities only in a mean degree, and exercising them for objects infinitely small. To wit : he will weave a long web of falsehoods that he may cheat you of a para, and will watch a whole night for the

chance of robbing you of a cigarette. In his company, you dare not leave a knife, a cartridge, a comb, a quinine-bottle, a map, a shawl, a cigar-case, a handkerchief loose about your tent. Nothing is too hot for his mouth, too rough for his pouch. Yet, it would be a gross injustice to rank Yakoub with the thieves of countries like England, Italy, and France ; he is a man of the soil, even in his vices, and the rogueries which he loves to practise upon you are the growth of thousands of years. A Turpin on a Syrian road would filch your powder and tobacco, your salt and quinine, your razor and shirt, from the mere lust of possessing them ; but Yakoub only pilfers as becomes an Arab lord of the soil, who, while condescending to lead you and feed you through his country, cannot help exercising his fascinations over your waifs and strays. With him, the act of thieving is that of a man taking his own by stratagem wherever he may chance to find it. These odds and ends of property—these bits of leather, these pots of meat and sardines, these knives and spoons, these dustings of the powder horn, these drainings of the brandy-flask—are his royalties, his flotsam and jetsam, his fines, his liveries, and his courts leet. Like so many of his wild countrymen, though he lives by travel, and prefers a tent to a house, he is a stranger to all those longings and sentiments which drive the Gaul and Saxon over the face of the earth. He thinks that a man who leaves his home for any other cause than that of finding better food and more abundant water, must be mad ; and he regards the Frank masters whom he serves and cheats, as a number of restless spirits, cursed and driven forth into the desert to be the spoil and prey of God's chosen sons. Yet, the pleasure of cheating is, in his eye, greater than the gain. When filching from your store, is he not spoiling the Egyptian ? In riches and in strength—as a rider, as a shot—he feels that he might meet with but small success in a contest with the Frank ; but in craft and skill he knows himself more than your match ; and when he tithes your goods, believing you too dull to detect him in these petty frauds, his heart dilates with a peculiar pride and joy. Who is the

superior then? You may daunt him by your daring, awe him by your pride; but can you deprive him of this Syrian consolation of seeing you made the daily victim of his more agile fingers and more crafty brain?

By calling himself a Christian, Yakoub escapes that service of arms which his soul abhors; but to make all things safe, and to win for himself many protectors, he appears to have accepted all the churches at once, Roman and Coptic, Maronite and Greek. The lord of every creed, the slave of none, this Arab is a perfect pattern of obedience to the law. Often, in the early morning, when the camp was rising, and the sun was not, I have caught him at his devotions, not before an altar of the Virgin, but before the tomb of a Moslem sheikh. If he be an Ansayreh (as I more than suspect), he can hug himself with the thought that he is overreaching both the devil and the Padishah—saving his soul from Gehenna and his body from Hassan Bey.

A Christian in Syria, whether a true man or a false, while he rides his camel, shakes down his olives, and remains at peace with his sovereign and his neighbour, has no use for the sword. Even when the Maronites invade a Druse village, burn a few vines, lift a few cattle, and get beaten for their pains by fifty young men against three hundred, they can call on the Turk from Damascus, the Zouave from Algiers, to defend them against the irate and avenging owners of fields which have been laid waste. Nor has a Maronite, in the view of men like Yakoub, any more need to be truthful and honest than he has to be brave. To fight is a Turk's business; to speak the truth is a Frank's business. To treat his word as a bond, a pledge to be kept at all costs, is a mystery of conduct which a Syrian leaves with his wondering contempt to the English and the Turks. More than once, when our tent had been pitched for the night near a well, among peasants and soldiers, Yakoub has replied to a caution about leaving such things on the mat as might tempt these natives to pilfer—"Heugh! they are safe. Turk no take them, his religion not allow him to steal."

“What news of Akeel Aga this morning?”

“Bad news, Master,” says Yakoub, who, knowing that the country is much disturbed, would rather hang on at Jaffa, doing nothing and being paid for it, until safer times. “Akeel gone east, Akeel gone south; Akeel is the wind; to-day at Tiberias, to-morrow at Petra, next day at Suez; Turk never catch the wind, and never catch Akeel. Shall we start?”

“At ten o'clock.”

CHAPTER IV.

PLAIN OF SHARON.

AT twelve we are in the saddle, ploughing through the sand ; three horses and a mule ; one good revolver, a second so-so, the property of Yakoub, who begins firing it at dogs and eagles before we are clear of the mills and gardens ; all my people mounted, save imp Ishmael, who, happy and alert in the possession of three piastres, runs on foot with the mule, saying, with a wicked grin, that he will run over to Ramleh and prepare our pipes.

We are all in high spirits and in perfect health. Before mounting our mares, we went to look for the place in which Tabitha, the Dorcas, the gazelle, as we should call her, the darling, had been laid after her second death. Of course it was in a garden ; almost equally of course this garden was the property of an American. How soon a young people learn to beat the old ! Not a house in Jaffa is of greater age than the houses in Soho Square. Since the Apostle came over from Lydda, along this path, to raise Tabitha from the dead, Jaffa has been razed by Vespasian and Godfrey, by Saladin and the Egyptian sultans ; these shores have been swept by Norseman, Greek and Venetian pirates, and by a rabble of conquerors, from the Persian and Arabian down to the Memloulk and the French. Bertrand de la Broquière, who landed in Palestine for his sins, while the English were roasting his countrywoman, Joan of Arc, for a witch, describes the town as so rent and

razed in his time, that a few sheds thatched with leaves, like these in the market-place now, offered him the only shelter which a pilgrim thrown upon the coast could find. Into one of these reed tents the Christian knight had to crawl for protection against the attacks of a noontide sun. Yet an Arab merchant owns the tanner's house, and a Yankee consul boasts of possessing Tabitha's tomb !

Yakoub leads the way, in his place of pride, through the knots of pedlars, fruitsellers, mat-weavers, monks, and ruleteers, throwing a jest at one, kissing a compliment to a second, crossing himself to a third ; his words not always clean, for a Syrian of the lower orders calls a cat by its name with a license of speech that would amaze the roughs of our black country and startle the rowdies of New York. A smile, at most an ejaculation, is the only answer of fellah and Bedaween to his lightsome jest. A Syrian rarely laughs, and he never laughs aloud, though he may pride himself highly on the possession and appreciation of eloquence and wit. When we cross the path of a person of rank and esteem, a consul, a *cadi*, a sheikh, an ecclesiastic, a bey, Yakoub pulls up his mare, says a few humble syllables under his bated breath, and if welcomed by a smile, for every one knows him, he may venture to approach the dignitary, to touch his hand, and even to kiss it. Friends never give hands to each other in Palestine ; for to seize a man's hand is to crave his protection, to proffer yourself his servant ; hence the act is one of obedience and devotion, almost of servility. A slave to whom you make a present, a servant to whom you do a kindness, will rush to your hand and press it against his temples or his lips. Equals salute each other ; if Moslem, by the soft Syrian phrase of Peace be with you ; if Christians by the sign of the cross. This salutation is made with singular grace, even by the beggar in his rags. An English traveller, making no sign of the cross when he greets a brother, is commonly supposed by the Syrians to be a Turk.

For an hour we plod through the pink and burning

sands ; gardens on our right and left to Yazor, one of the many Bible Hazors, now a village of three or four huts ; lemons, apples, pomegranates in endless glory ; now passing a kiosk, with an Arab at his prayers, next a fountain and a group of mounted men, anon the body of a mule picked clean by dogs and kites. Ribs, skulls, thigh-bones of animals, whiten these Syrian tracks, even close to large towns, and within city gates ; for the land is poor, and it is the custom of this country that nothing, not even a bone, shall be lost. Falling under its load by the wayside, an ass, a camel, must be left behind, like the stalks which slip from the binder's arm. "Why," asks the compassionate Arab, "should food be taken from the famishing tooth? God made the jackal and the vulture, and having made them, meant that they should be fed." Even man himself, when dying in these desert roads, expects to fare little better than the beast that bears him. Starting on a long ride, an Arab will equip himself with a pipe, a water-skin, a prayer-book, and a winding-sheet, in which his body may be rolled by his servant or companion, and then hidden in the sand. Slight moles of earth, many of which the wolves and jackals have disturbed, may be seen in the wilderness ; graves of men who have fallen sick by the wayside, who have been left by their fellows to die alone, and who, in gasping out their lives, have just succeeded in covering their faces with a little sand.

The first time your horse shies at a bleeding carcass or stumbles over a pile of bones, your gorge will rise into the mouth and your nostrils close on the offence ; yet in three months of Syrian travel you will learn to treat a skeleton in the road with as much indifference as a gentleman in a turban and a lady in a veil.

While she is yet in the broad lane between Jaffa and Yazor, Sabeah the swift, the beautiful, begins to gib and start ; on seeing which signs of a coming storm, I shorten the rein and touch her flank with a spur. Off like a shot she flies, brisk as a racer, mettlesome as a colt, clean through

the hot hedges of prickly pears into the open plain and the cooler air ; but in less than ten minutes she is blown and spent. We are a mile in advance, for Saïd must hold on by the baggage mule, who cannot caper and trot under her weight of kitchen-range, bed, and tent. If we stand and wait in the sun, Sabeah pricks and snaps at my shoes, which, not being sheathed in iron like those of her usual riders, lie tempting to her teeth. Thinking she must be thirsty, like myself, we spurt forward along the track towards a fountain which we can see in the distance, white and alluring, guarded by a sheikh ; but on my riding up to it, and dismounting from the mare, the sheikh makes signs to me that of this sweet water, in this dry season, horses may not be allowed to drink. "Further on," he says, "at Beit Dejan, there is a wheel with a camel tank ;" and the train having now come up, and the laws of the well being explained by Ishmael, we prick on together, Sabeah, unmindful of my cares in her behalf, still snapping at my feet.

At Beit Dejan, on a slight twist in the road, we find the wheel and well, and hear a delicious splash and rustle in the troughs. To slip from my seat, to dip Sabeah's nose into the fluid, is the work of a second ; but no sooner has she lapped up a mouthful of water, than one sees that the refuse falling back from her lips into the tank is dabbled and red. Opening her mouth, I find a gorged leech dangling from her gum. But the reptile being snipt off, and the mare's nose dipt into the cooling steam, the blood still flows from between her teeth, and forcing them open, I find two other leeches lodged in the roof of her mouth. Poor little beast ! how grateful and relieved she seems ; how gay, how gentle, when I have torn these suckers from her flesh and soused the water about her wounds ; and how my hunting-whip yearns to descend on the shoulders of that laughing and careless Nubian slave !

Two minutes' walk from this well, half hidden among palms and olives, lies Beit Dejan, once Beth Dagon, House of Dagon, the ancient fish-god of Philistia, emblem of

fecundity by land and sea. Dagon, a marine divinity, was adored under the form of a merman ; a being which had a human bust and a dolphin's tail ; a Syrian Poseidon, with a difference in the lower parts ; an obvious deity for a people going down to the sea in ships. The great temples raised in his honour stood at Gaza and Ashdod, a few miles on our right ; but the merman worship extended along the coast, and perhaps far into the plain. By him Goliath swore, and in one of his temples, Samson, when shorn and blind, was slain. Less, however, for the sake of Samson than out of love for him who sang the *Agonistes*, we rode round the cluster of loose stones and shining gardens which bear the name of Dagon now, saying softly to ourselves—

This day a solemn feast the people held,
To Dagon, their sea idol,—

and calling to mind that story of the ark, when the Philistines prevailed against Hophni and Phineas, the sons of Eli, and the ark was set up in the temple of Dagon, and the sea idol was thrown down in the night, his head and the palms of his hands being cut off, and his tail and trunk, his ignoble members, left.

On passing Beit Dejan, the country opens ; gardens and enclosures cease ; the creamy-pink sands fall back into the rear ; great herds of sheep and goats, of buffaloes and camels, roam through the plain. We come upon no more wells.

Strange bands of men are going up to Jerusalem on foot ; poor Jews from Posen and Tangiers ; Christian pilgrims from La Plata or Trebizond ; wild Moslems from the Punjab and the Soudan ; for Jerusalem is a holy place to nearly all the children of men. The Jew is going up to Zion, that he may die in the city of his fathers, and mingle with the dust of patriarch and seer ; the Christian that he may kiss the stone of redemption, and light his taper at the sacred fire ; the Moslem that he may gaze on the seat of

judgment, and recite his prayer under the dome of the Rock. They have come, these poor wild men, from every corner of the globe, come in hunger and thirst, through frost and fire, bringing with them neither purse nor scrip, neither food nor drink. They are the only pilgrims. They trudge in the heat of day, they sleep under the stars by night. Through the desert wastes, and the corn lands, and the date countries, they wend their unflagging way ; asking, in the name of God, for a little black bread here, a bunch of grapes or a mouthful of lentils there, and slaking their thirst from the wayside well. Few of these men can speak a word of the native tongue. In the group which we are now passing through near Ramleh, are men of tropical race, a Cingalese, an Ilanoon, two or three Malays ; in the last group on the road there was a negro from Zanzibar. Nearly all these Christian and Moslem hajjees are converts to the faith, burning with the zeal that consumes the bosom in which fire has been newly lit. Yakoub, and men like Yakoub, have a kingly disdain for these travellers in rags ; but Saïd is kind to them, giving them good words, and sharing with them his melon and his bread.

These hajjees are the lowly ones of the earth. Grimy with dirt, lean with privation and fatigue—their coats made of skin, their shirts hanging in rents—they are respected by the good Syrian peasants as men engaged in performing a sacred vow. Though his own hut may be wretched and his shelf bare of food, the fellah will never refuse to share with them his shelter and his crust.

These hajjees going up to the Holy City are not our only comrades of the road. From time to time a cloud of dust, a gleam of spears, inform us of a troop of Bedaween flying in hot haste along the noiseless plain. They come in threes and fives ; well armed, well mounted men ; eager of eye, resolute of lip ; bands going south towards Gaza and Ashdod, as though the war-cry had been raised, and a meeting-place had been named.

By their looks, by their accoutrements, they appear to be

either Akeel's men or some tribe in league with the Hanadi who obey that troublesome sheikh. It being of moment that we should learn what we can of Akeel, Yakoub now and then pricks off to a point where he must cross the path of these riders ; but he only wastes his time, and throws jebilé into the dirt, for the party is nearly always a family of the Anezi, who either know very little, or have orders to be dumb.

"Bedaween very close, Master," says the scout. "Cabouli at Tiberias ; Akeel not there ; Akeel nowhere ; only fires and robberies everywhere."

A sleepy dawdle through the orchards among which Lion-Heart and his English bowmen lay so long, brings you to the gates of Ramleh in the sands, a city surrounded by empty cisterns and teeming cemeteries ; the approaches to the Latin convent being defended by a forest of prickly pears. A howl of wild dogs, a welcome like that which Saladin gave the English knights, salutes your visit ; but the sun is too strong for their vice, and after yelping in angry chorus for a moment, they crawl into shade and drop into a doze.

After much pounding at the convent door with stones, a head in a cowl is seen peeping cautiously above the wall ; and a pair of insolent black eyes make inventory of our number and estimate of our state. On a quick admonition to be alive, the cowl drops back ; and in about an hour, as it seems to our impatience, a wicket in the gate is opened, when, a parley having taken place, and the fathers being satisfied as to the condition of our creed and purse, a heavy beam is heard to fall, a massive chain to rattle, and then the door grates slowly back to a width admitting a dismounted man and beast.

We stride into an open court, over the wall of which the fruit of a palm tree hangs in golden bunches, and the gate is again locked fast and safe.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONVENT OF RAMLEH.

A MERRY fat old padre, Angelo by name, receiving us at the gate, leads us away into a square dark room, having a range of sofa, stuffed with coarse grain and populous with fleas, and a small open window, through which the cool air of a covered chamber floats in and fans us. Kicking off boots and spurs, laying down belts and pistols, we recline and pant, longing for a draught of fresh water to allay the thirst, but bowing to the wise old padre, who, slow and pursy, counsels a mere rinse of the mouth, a sip of lemonade, a cup of hot coffee, boiled thick and black, and the soothing whiff of a chibouque. It is hard to resist sucking the temptation down into one's throat ; but Angelo prevails, and in ten minutes the coffee and jebilé have wrought a miraculous cure.

While dinner is being cooked in the convent kitchen, there is time for a stroll through this town of Mohammedan Ramleh, once the Ramula of Lion-Heart, and to push through the prickly pears and multitudinous graves towards the rent arches and walls of an ancient khan, caravanserai, or wayside inn, from one angle of which ruin springs the famous minaret of the White Mosque, an edifice rivalling in grace and lightness the more celebrated dome of the Rock.

The wide path running below this minaret is the great caravan road from Cairo to Damascus, along which all the overland commerce of Egypt and Persia has to pass on

camels. It is not much of a road, having no pavement, hedge, and ditch ; but a king's highway is unknown to the East. In our English Bible the word "road" occurs only once, and then it is used in the sense of raid—an inroad. We hear of paths, of ways ; never of roads, which must be regal works, the offspring of art and the production of a settled peace. A Greek, a Roman made roads ; an Arab, a Jew, never. A dweller in tents (and whether he lodge in a house, or sleep under a tree, the spirit of a Syrian is still that of a dweller in tents) detests a path so easy that wheels can roll and cannon may be drawn along it. To such a man a great road seems a great peril. "Why smooth the rocks from Jaffa to Jerusalem?" asks Suraya : "that the Russians may send their siege guns to Mount Zion?" An Oriental feels no want of roads, for he never dreams of riding in araba, coach, and cart. It is true that these flints would kill a good horse, but a native of Syria never rides such a thing. We hear so much of the Arabian mares, and we know so well about the Bedaween's flights, that we are apt to consider these Orientals as a nation of horsemen. It is all a dream. The Bedaween rides, for his safety in the desert depends on his speed ; but the Arab of towns and of settled life never mounts a horse. When he does not care to walk, he bestrides an ass. Indeed, the common Oriental feels a respect for the noble beast which prevents him from associating it freely with his daily doings ; and if we may judge from the wall paintings of Egypt, the warriors of Pharaoh, though they yoked their horses to chariots, rarely got upon their backs. And now, as in the days of Pharaoh a horse is considered as an engine of war, not a beast of burden ; a proud plaything of caliphs, not a creature to be ridden by farmers and citizens in their upstart pride. Priests ride on donkeys, pashas on mules. I met the Seraskier of Damascus riding through the desert on a mule. Ibrahim of Egypt, the dashing cavalry officer, rode from Cairo to Konieh on an ass. While, therefore, his homely beast trots nimbly over the broken stones, what call has an

Oriental to mend his road? If he can pick his way along it, all is well ; but to do so his eye must be sure ; for even this road from Cairo to Damascus, though it follows the plain and the sea, may be lost by a careless rider in the blaze of noon.

Returning to the convent, in waking the wild dogs you rouse an officer of customs, who, pipe in mouth, and sword in hand, starts up from a doze and motions you to halt. The den out of which he darts is a scoop in the wall of thorns, such as in England we might cut in our laurel trees and box. The gaudy and dirty fellow carries a bunch of pistols in his belt, at once for ostentation and defence. His office is to stop all caravans and traders on the road ; to examine their wares ; and to collect from them all dues which have been laid by the Sultan and the Pasha. But his interruption is only another form of demanding tip. Pay it and pass on ; a piastre, with a pinch of jebilé, will satisfy this turbaned officer of your being an honest man.

Like the women of every part of Syria, those of Ramleh wear trousers, while their husbands and sons wear skirts ; but the ladies of this noble plain have another habit of dress, which may sometimes put a Saxon to the blush. In the doorways, in the streets, on the flat roofs of Ramleh, young and pretty damsels may be seen with their faces covered to the eyes, and their bosoms naked to the waist. The yelek, a vest, is worn by these ladies open at the front. A girl, it is true, wears a chemisette beneath her yelek ; but among the roses of Sharon it is the fashion to cut this chemisette away from the bust, so that when the yelek is left open, as it is always left by the ladies of Ramleh and Jaffa, the graces of the feminine bosom are abundantly exposed. The sight is not always lovely. As a rule, a Syrian's bust has little of that height, that roundness of line, which the Prophet of Islam is said to have loved in the sex, and which the Arabian story-tellers extol in Safie. Rarely are the breasts small and round, like two pomegranates of equal size ; in truth, they hang loose and long, and appear

to the eye of every beholder veined and coarse. Exposure to heat and dust soon dyes the original gold of a peasant's skin to the darkness of a Bedaween's cheek ; and as to shape and fulness, it is said that a young mother on a journey never stops to give her child the breast, but tosses the teat over her shoulder for the babe to suck.

A mixed and voluble society sits down to dinner in the cool dim convent room, most of the men being ecclesiastics, papas and padres, monks and friars, with appetites which Angelo, kindly and overfed, smiles unctuously to see. That dear old man has not carried his serge gown, his rope belt and cowl, through a dozen miles of sun. Some of us have ridden from Jaffa, some from Jerusalem, and some from Gaza since the morning dawned ; so that each has either a fear to communicate or a tale to tell. English and Arabic, Russian and Romaic, Armenian and Italian, rattle round the board, while the handy fathers are serving up the stewed olives and fowls, the green figs and cheese, the roast eggs and water melons ; every one talking, no one listening ; the riot growing louder when our hosts have replaced the poor thin fluid on the table by a strong aromatic Cyprus wine. Akeel Aga, the Galilee sheikh, is either the hero or the inspiration of every tale.

A date merchant from Egypt tells how, in riding past El Mejdal and Beit Dûrâs, near Gaza and the sea, he had seen a good many black tents along the sand, from which he inferred that a signal has been given to the tribes, and that Akeel is retiring to the south. A Jew from Nablus reports of robberies and murders in every hamlet of Ephraim. A monk from Mar Saba says the wadies of the wilderness are unsafe, and the tribes beyond Jordan are astir. An Armenian pedlar, fresh from Mount Zion, says the holy city is alarmed, and Suraya is about to proclaim it in a state of siege. But our best story-teller, as becomes his age, his office, and his country, is a Greek Prior, who left his convent near the Holy Sepulchre at dawn, going on a sad errand to Jaffa and Stamboul. The physician of his convent

has been robbed and killed ; and the Greek Prior is going to Constantinople in search of a Frank successor to the murdered man.

This Frank doctor, a man of gentle bearing and of eminent skill, having lived his twenty years in Palestine, and being known to its people far and wide, could not be made to understand why a quarrel in Galilee between Cabouli and Akeel should frighten him from going a few miles into the country to see a friend. When told to take care, the old gentleman smiled, put on his hat, and rode away towards Nabulus through the Damascus Gate ; to be found at that gate in the morning bruised and spent, his pulse at the last throb, the only garments left on his body being the crushed hat on his head and a loose rag round his loins.

Hailed in a lonely track by a dozen strange men, and told he must stop and strip, he had begun to urge on the rough fellows that he was a doctor and a Frank. But the Arabs had no time for talk. To Bedaween thieves the art of robbery has never been one of the fine arts, and knowing nothing of the history of Claude du Val, they have acquired no taste for the more delicate doings of the highway. They never touch their hats to a lady whom they rob, never throw back letters and keys to a gentleman whom they despoil of his lighter trash. They just drag a man down from his saddle, seize upon his horse and arms, tear the clothes from his back, divide his money and his jewels, and then either stun him with a club or rope him to a tree. Before his senses can return to him they are gone, with his horse, his gun, his boots, his shirt, and everything that was his. The story of the man who went down to Jericho and fell among thieves, is repeated in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem from day to day, so that the lesson of the parable never becomes stale.

Despite of his prayers and threats, the Frank physician was stripped and cuffed. Before his face the Bedaween rascals divided his effects ; one getting his horse, a second

his repeater, a third his coat, a fourth the contents of his saddle-bags. His hat alone seemed to give them pause; they could neither sit upon it, nor carry water in it, nor shoe horses with it; so they tossed it on the ground and left it, the most precious salvage in his wardrobe to the poor old man. Coming to his wits when they were gone, he began to retrace his steps. Staggering over the stones and through the sun, his feet all torn, his skin all scorched, he found his way, naked as the babe just born, to a peasant's hut, where he obtained a rag and a drink of water. Toiling through the night, now resting on a stone, now binding up his wounds in the coarse grass and *planta genista*, he reached the Damascus Gate before it was yet day, and sitting down on a mound of earth, was there found, fainting and speechless, by the Turkish guard. At noon that day he died.

Such is the tale told by the Greek Prior, and every word of it proves to be true. Having told his story very well, and having frightened everybody, the Greek Prior says grace, and the company rises and shakes itself free from the glamour of his words.

Eight or ten friars are lounging on the convent roof; some finishing their prayers; some smoking cigarettes; some grinning over the wall at a colony of dogs, which are improving the cooler hour by fighting and making love. The Jew has gone to his cell, the Armenians are pacing their whitewashed court. Though the sun is still up, many of the guests are making ready for bed, for the horses are to be saddled at one, and the caravan is to move at two o'clock, so as to pass by El Kubâb, the most dangerous point on the road, by dark, reaching Latrûn, the ancient Modin, by the hour of dawn.

The air is warm, and the spirit languid. Ishmael sets me a stool, a narghiley, a cup, under a canopy of vines, and on a clap of the hands brings coffee and the charcoal fire. Two or three stragglers lounge on the convent roof, inhaling the Lebanon leaf and watching the sun go down into the sea. Half an hour after sunset Ramleh seems asleep, the silence

being unbroken save by the drone of an insect or the snarl of a restless dog. Putting away the pipes, we take a last turn on the roof, a last peep over the wall. The fathers are issuing out of chapel and going into their cells. The dogs have crawled away under the prickly pears. The fire of the far west is fading into green and grey. A string of camels, led on by an ass' colt, is bobbing into the town. A veiled figure pauses for an instant like a spirit at our convent gate, and then flits by. The fans of a large palm tree sway and sigh ; the tower of the White Mosque shines like a jewel in the dusk ; and the evening stars throb slowly into lustrous life.

Good-night, good-night !

CHAPTER VI.

NIGHT RIDE TO MODIN.

DREAMING of Modin, and of all that this name of Modin had once meant in Israel—revolt against Epiphanes, war, glory, nationality—my hours of rest fly swiftly into midnight. About one o'clock (when the old priest has been laid in his princely tomb, and his heroic sons, having saved their country, and being crowned with every gift which their countrymen could lawfully bestow upon them, are about to seize into their own hands that sacred office which none but God could give away) Ishmael creeps into my cell and dissolves the dream.

Not as a right, but as a joke, one of the Italian padres has given Ishmael a tumbler of fluid for the Saxon's face, telling him that the Greek Prior and the Jew merchant, having more sense than to dip their noses into cold water of a morning, are already in the guest-room of the convent, waiting for breakfast, and in the absence of stronger fare are burning a bit of charcoal on a few shreds of Lebanon leaf. A meal of hot coffee, hard eggs, grapes, olives, white bread, and poor red wine, awaits us in the refectory, where Padre Angelo is moping round the table, his eyes half open and his soul asleep. At one in the night some thirty sinners sit down to eat and drink; a lamp of the pattern found in Pompeii lighting the room with a red and fitful glare. Most of those who dined and made merry are again at table; but less talkative than they were last night; each man appearing

to feel that with another day a new adventure has begun. Who among us can say where he will sleep to-night?

About two o'clock, saying our adieus to Angelo, who pockets his piastres and prays for our safe arrival in Jerusalem, Saïd, Yakoub, and the rest of us file through the convent gate; man, horse, ass, and camel; making a caravan about seventy weak. Two or three ladies are supposed to have joined us; seated in panniers on their camels; but the night is too dark to see whether they are Frank or Oriental. A dozen friars, of various sects and head-gears, ride on donkeys in our wake. These gentlemen in serge had planned to be away from the convent by one o'clock, but the sight of two English revolvers, working on the suggestion of uneasy dreams, in which the Frank physician and his Bedaween plunderers had probably played their parts, have induced the holy and nervous men to wait our going, and to take up a safe position in the line of march, between the baggage and its protecting fire.

Cool and fresh flows the morning wind upon our temples and through our lungs, as we escape from the pent lanes and streets of Ramleh into the open plain. A colony of dogs, waking up into life as we clatter through the eastern gate, greet our departure from their city with the same wild music that made our welcome. Sabeah jogs on drowsily in the dark, less like a mare of the desert, which should be all fire and spirit, than like a pedlar's hack; but the cold night air, blowing down from the hills into our mouths, inclines both man and beast to sleep.

On our eyes getting used to the starlight, we can see that though our horses' feet plough heavily into the soil, our march is along a beaten track, open to the fields, broad and soft, as if water were near, something like a waggon-way through a Norfolk field. Dozing and dreaming along the spongy road, a priest's donkey runs against a camel, and rolls into the dust; the overturned padre roaring at the top of his voice for help, which not a man in the caravan has the heart to lend. All modes of travel, like all forms of

warfare, harden and sear the heart ; but searing and hardening beyond all other mode of travel is that of roving in such a country as Syria becomes in a time of disorder like that occasioned by the revolt of Akeel Aga. A man who is mounted on a fleet mare, armed with a stout whip and a good revolver, finds it difficult to feel for the miseries of a beggar jolting along the road upon an ass. The good Samaritan must have been a most rare and noble fellow, worthy to adorn the most beautiful of parables. With us, the fall of a monk is hailed with a burst of merriment—especially from the priests and friars—and the fallen donkey and his load are laughingly left behind us in the darkness and the mud.

To shake the slumber from his eyelids, Yakoub, when we have cleared El Buweireh, the first hamlet on our line of march, pricks on ahead ; and Sabeah, catching at the thud of hoofs in the loam, breaks quietly into a trot. Her motion having startled me from a doze, we soon leave the Greek and Armenian fathers, with the camels and their fair burdens in our wake ; and by the time we have reached Kubâb, the mass of our long procession can neither be seen nor heard. Ishmael only, trotting by the light luggage mule, is close upon our heels.

Kubâb, silent as the grave and treacherous as the sea, we pass through at a walk, unwilling to disturb a population which is only too apt either to beg from the strong, or to steal from the weak. This part of the great plain has an evil repute which a good many travellers affirm that it has richly won. More than one hamlet in the neighbourhood has been lately burnt by the Turks, who have scorched many families of peasants from the land, in a righteous but inadequate return for their many and atrocious crimes. Having cleared the heap on which Kubâb stands, in the midst of olive trees and ridges of prickly pears, we catch a murmur as of horses' feet on our left, coming in the direction of Nuba or Noba, that town in which Lion-Heart, of whose epic this plain is the scenery, paused so long.

“Horsemen!” cries Yakoub, reining in. Hushing the still night, and with hands on our revolvers, bending forward towards the dim fields on our left hand, we can hear the footfall of horses crushing their way through stubble and stones. In a moment, while they sounded afar off, they are among us; five dark figures, on brisk little mares, and poising above them their bamboo spears. A word or two of parley, in which Ishmael has his share, and we are asking each other for the news; on one side, our little party in advance; on the other side, five armed Bedaween, not Akeel’s own lambs the Hanadi, but men of the Anezi, a powerful tribe with whom he has made a league of friendship. We are going up the hills into Judah; they are crossing the plain towards Gaza, where the sheikhs have appointed them to meet. Perhaps they consider us too strong to be robbed; for a Bedaween rarely thinks it right to attack under an advantage of five to one; not from any fear for his skin, being personally brave as a wolf; but from having studied the art of robbery on the highways, and found that when otherwise conducted it does not pay. A Frank, when assaulted by thieves, is sure to fire, and not sure to miss his aim. He may kill a mare. In that case blood must be shed, and of all things in the world an Arab has a strong dislike to shedding blood. God has commanded him not to take life, and he believes that by divine appointment the curse of blood will fall upon his house.

Our Anezi friends beg a little bread and tobacco, which we give them, and a little powder, which we refuse. They expected to hear that English ships are at Jaffa, and French soldiers in Beyrout; and in return for our news of what is being done along the coast, they tell us that Hebron has revolted from the Turks, and that all the tribes beyond Jordan are in arms. Saying this, they make their salaam, and ride away into the night.

“Have they told us the truth, Yakoub?”

“The truth, Master!” says Yakoub with scorn. “Their religion will not suffer them to lie.”

Day is just breaking on the hills in front ; a faint first flush of dawn, as we near the hill on which Modin, birth-place of the Maccabees, once stood ; and on which Latrûn, Ladrone, the robber's den, now stands. This hill—a mound under the great mountains, a hill on the level plain—controls the Bab el Wady—gate of the glen—the chief entrance on this side into the mountains of Judea ; so that nature has made it to be for ever either a work of defence or a place of thieves. In truth, it has been each in turn.

The new name of Latrûn, completely superseding that of Modin, comes from Disma, the penitent thief, who is said to have been a bandit on this very road, lying in wait for merchants in the Bab el Wady ; where, hiding behind rocks, and pouncing upon unarmed men, he spoiled them of their goods, and sometimes took away their lives. By a habit of the language and the people, such a hero was almost certain to give his name to the place in which he lived. Modin became Latrûn, as Bethany became El Azariyeh, and as Kirjath Jearim, afterwards known as Kuryet el Enab, Village of Vines, has become in our own day Abu Gosh.

But the charm which draws men to this heap of stones, this tangle of shrubs and thorns, is not derived from Disma and his misdeeds. It springs from that epical story of the Maccabees—the last victorious rising and resistance of the Jews—which, even as a story, is nobler and more picturesque than that of the fabled siege of Troy.

Upon this high mound, Apelles, one of the Greek commissioners sent by Epiphanes, king of Syria, to put down Jehovah and set up Jupiter in His holy place, built an altar to idols, on which altar he commanded the people to come and offer up sacrifice. One recreant Jew, fearing the king and forgetting God, obeyed his summons ; when the aged priest Mattathias, a man of noble lineage and saintly life, going up the hill with his five sons, their strong swords shining in their hands, set upon the idolatrous crowd, slew Apelles and the apostate Jew, broke down the idol altar,

scattered the king's commissioners and servants, and before the Greek soldiers and magistrates could act against them, fled away into the mountain passes. In these glens and heights over Modin, bold men began to gather round these outlaws, who became a band, a company, a battalion, exercising themselves in making raids, cutting off scouts, interrupting communications, spreading alarm in the cities and hope in the country. The old priest died ; his body was laid on this mound ; and his heroic son Judas, called the Lion of Judah, counting his forces, few in array, but in nature hardy and desperate men, ready to perish, commenced the actual national war. By night attacks, by sudden surprises, he taught his people how to fight and conquer. Alert of foot and quick of brain ; yesterday in the mountains, to-day in the plain ; now marching on a post, now storming a castle ; Judas in a few months of service changed his rabble of zealots into an army of solid troops, capable of meeting and repelling the royal hosts commanded by generals who had been trained in the Macedonian school of arms.

Judas met Apollonius, the Greek general commanding Samaria, and overthrew him. Next, he defeated Seron, general of Cœle-Syria, in the great battle of Beth-horon, the Morgarten of Jewry. Afterwards assailed by Lysias, in the still greater battle of Emmaus, the Sempach of Jewry, he gained a magnificent victory ; on which he marched into Jerusalem, cleansed that city of idols, purified the Temple hill, re-established Circumcision and the Sabbath, and solemnly dedicated the Holy of Holies to the living God. But his toils were not ended ; for a new king of Syria sent fresh armies, under Nicanor, against the patriots. Judas met and overthrew Nicanor in the terrible field of Adasa. Then came a cloud from another side, and the Lion of Judah fell fighting against enemies, outnumbering his forces twenty to one, and was buried with his father on this Modin mound. Jonathan and Simon, his heroic brothers, his equals in genius and address, if not in the fiery quality of his blood, succeeded to his command, and their

sons became kings and high-priests of the country which he had saved.

Yakoub stands near the horses, while Ishmael leads the way by a quiet lane to the summit ; a wide space covered with ruins, perhaps of a palace, certainly of a tomb ; from which a magnificent view of the broad plain, and of the



COUNTRY OF THE MACCABEAN WAR.

bold valley of Ajalon, rewards the climber for his toil. Far off, the sea is shining in the dawn, but unlike our English waters, is without a sail. Near us, in our front, rise the mountains into which Mattathias fled with his sons ; vast, rugged, dark, abrupt. We could fire a shot into Bab el Wady at their feet. Above, to the left, perched high among the clouds, is Bethoron ; four miles from this place stood Adasa ; and in the plain, here at our feet, beyond the camel path, lies the

village of Amwâs, on the site of Emmaus. The country bristles with battle-fields, and the whole aspect of the land is heroic.

Modin is one of the centres of Jewish thought and action : for the Maccabees were priests as well as kings ; and a man who overlooks its story will be apt to stray when he comes to study the events of a later and more sacred drama than a national war.

Nobler servants than the Maccabees it would be hard to find in Israel ; larger service than they rendered to their country it would be impossible to find. It is not enough to say that they found the Jews enslaved, and that they left them free. In a political sense, they made the country. When Mattathias struck down the pagan altar on Modin, putting his life, and the lives of all his sons, upon the issue of that daring act, Judah and Israel had become things of history, and the Israelite faith had been abolished by laws in which the people appeared to have acquiesced. The Temple was profaned ; the usual reading of the law was prohibited ; circumcision had ceased ; Sabbath observance was forbidden on pain of death ; the succession of high-priests was broken, Onias, the true pontiff, having fled away to the great Jewish community at Memphis on the Nile. Not one man in a thousand Jews could speak Hebrew ; in its place the people made love and money in Chaldaic, Syriac, and Greek. Out of this prostrate misery, the genius, daring, and devotion of one splendid family raised the nation to a height of power recalling the glories of David's reign.

But, on the other side, the very qualities which enabled these princes to serve their country in a political sense, caused them to ruin it in a dogmatic sense. The Maccabees were men of the world ; soldiers, orators, statesmen, rather than priests of God. In the course of their fiery struggle against the Gentile power they came to look upon religion as a part of their system of government, a branch of their police, and a sign of their peculiar cause. Descending from the Babylonian Exiles, they belonged to the new class of

men—the party of nationality and reform. Being able and daring men, whom no fear could restrain and no power could resist, when the public service seemed to demand a great concentration of public powers, they felt no scruple in seizing into their own hands offices incompatible with each other.

In short, the Maccabees led Israel away from the Mosaic theory of a divine government into the adoption of a worldly principle of nationality ; a position in which the Jew lost his birthright of a universal priesthood ; to which birthright he was not recalled until John went forth into the wilderness and began to baptize his countrymen back into the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GREAT SEPARATION.

IN a slight lay work, aiming no higher than to sketch some facts and sceneries which may assist in framing the sacred story, it will be sufficient to describe in a few words the points on which the Maccabean policy appears to have differed from that of the Written Law.

Moses had set the Spiritual Powers apart from the Temporal Powers ; not as to persons only, but as to families and tribes ; so that for thirteen hundred years of Hebrew life no priest had ever been made a king. This first Mosaic principle was vitiated by the Maccabees, when a priest of Modin was raised to the throne of David, and the whole of his kinsmen were elevated to princely rank.

Moses had consecrated the line of Eleäzar the son of Aaron to the High-priesthood for ever. This second Mosaic principle was set aside by the Maccabees ; Jonathan, the youngest son of Mattathias, a man who had no pretensions to the sacred office beyond those of power and opportunity, seizing the pontifical robes, going up to the Temple, and performing the holy rites.

Moses had given a Written Law to his people ; a law which he had engraved on stone, and placed for safety in the ark ; a law from which men were forbidden to take one word, and to which they were equally forbidden to add one word. This third Mosaic principle, weakened by usage and

events before the Maccabean reign, fell into complete neglect when the written code was amplified into the elaborate Oral Law.

Moses had appointed one faith, one service, for the whole body of Israel, who were to have one ark, one tabernacle, one covenant, one temple, in a word—one Church. This fourth Mosaic principle was disregarded under the Maccabees, in whose time the Separatists were established in political authority, and the Jews were divided into Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, and other parties of less historical renown.

Moses had told his followers, in the awful Voice speaking out of Sinai, that the children of Jacob were called to a Universal Priesthood: "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a nation of priests:" and he had so framed his laws, precepts, and ordinances, that all the peculiarities of Hebrew life should be made to foster and preserve the sacramental truth of Israel being a living witness of Jehovah to the outer nations, an agency through which the whole earth should in time be reconciled to God. This fifth Mosaic principle was proudly repudiated by the Maccabees, who adopted the Separatist theory of national life, and withdrew their people from communion with the Gentile world.

Thus it came to pass, under the rule of these brave and able men, that the Judge who led his followers out of Egypt, would have been a stranger to the great powers, the great institutions, the great bodies, which governed and divided Israel in the days of JESUS; to the synagogue, to the Sanhedrin, to the Great College, to the schools of Hillel and Shammai, to the princely high-priests, to the Mishna, to Samaritan and Jew, to Pharisee, Sadducee, and Essene. A generation had grown up which knew Moses mainly as a traditionary figure, somewhat as a Greek remembered Lycurgus. Moses had become a name, a type, a landmark in the past; he was scarcely any longer a living fact. The Law which he had proclaimed from Sinai and bequeathed to Joshua, like the language in which he had talked with God

and written down the divine commands, had been in a great measure forgotten by the Jews ; having become the property of a learned caste, recruited from the schools. A Church which Moses would have known and David approved, no longer existed in any part of Syria ; in its stead there was a church of the Sanhedrin, the princes, and the Separatists.

An outward and political change so vast could not have been produced by a single man, or by a single generation of men, however gifted and courageous, unless it had been prepared in the popular mind. The change had commenced in Babylon, and had come upon the Exiles in the seductive guise of culture and progress.

Those men of Judah and Benjamin who had been carried away captives from a poor country into a rich one, from village labour into the magazines of a great city, from the companionship of rustics into a society in the last degree busy and refined, had found that in their new country the fields were better tilled, the houses better built, and the people better clad. Everything on which they gazed had seemed to them a lesson and a reproach. The fruits were riper, the wines were purer, the arts were nobler, than their own. For Babylon was the wonder of Asia ; her walls being leagues in length, her gates numbered by the score ; a temple of which the ruins make a hill, and a palace to which St. James's would be a kennel for dogs and lions, filling her royal quarter ; an inland sea lying close by her ramparts, from which a broad canal bore ships to the Persian Gulf. Her hanging gardens won the admiration of Greeks who had exhausted every marvel of the Nile. A poor Hebrew in the streets of Babylon was like a Savoyard in the Rue Royale, a Shetlander at Charing Cross.

During the years of their captivity, the tribes had become a new people. Nearly two generations having lived and died in the great city and its neighbourhood, the young Israelites had grown up with strange ideas and habits of life. They had not yet ceased to plant vines and olives, to

till the soil, to breed sheep and goats—for it was not until the later ages of Rome, when the Jews had lost their right to possess land, that they learned to become dealers and chapmen, to excel in the cunning of trade, to buy and lend money, to understand jewels and perfumes, to practise magian arts, and to be useful agents in the seraglio and the court ; but even in Babylon they had forgotten many of the feelings of husbandmen and shepherds, and acquired a new and unhappy preference for the luxuries of city life. As they grew rich in money and high in favour, pride of the heart and lust of the flesh had eaten into their souls ; the elders and priests—the men of learning and science—being worse offenders than the young men and laymen, so that in after times it became a saying in Judea that, “wickedness came out of Babylon from ancient judges who seemed to govern the people.” Along with this corruption of morals had come a change in the Hebrew creed, an addition to the Hebrew festivals, a modification of the Hebrew service. This change had not been sudden and revolutionary ; it had stolen upon the people unawares ; in the first place, from the loss of their native idiom and the disuse of their sacred books ; in the second place, from the contact of Zoroastrian doctrines akin to their own ; and in the third place, from such political events as the rise of Esther, the devotion of Daniel, and the conquest of Cyrus. A section of the Exiles had, after a time, set themselves apart from their brethren as reformers, calling themselves Pharisees, from “pharash,” set apart ; at first a patriotic and dissenting body (like our own early Puritans) ; but these dissenters had been scouted as heretics by those staunch old Hebrew Tories, the Sadducees. Still, this schism of the Separation spread. Every Hebrew educated in a Babylonian school was trained to understand his Law and his Prophets in a lay and even in a critical spirit ; and having ceased to speak Hebrew in his household, he could no longer study the Mosaic text for himself, or receive it from his teacher otherwise than through the medium of a foreign tongue.

Among the great changes wrought by the Exile was the growth of a strong affection on the part of all the captives for Chaldea, the Palm country, and for Babylon, the Gate of God. The rich, the learned, the high-born among them, declined to go back into the bleak mountain wastes of Judah ; and even the masons and dyers, the weavers and tinkers, whom Cyrus had sent away to rebuild Jerusalem, sighed over the country they were leaving as a paradise on earth ; a land of plenty, a land of great rivers and a bounteous soil, a land of pleasure, in which the seasons came and went with an indolent beauty unknown among their own barren ravines and rugged bluffs. A tender regret for Babylon became the poetry of their lives. The stories of Esther and Daniel made their favourite reading ; and Jews who scarcely knew the name of Pharaoh could recite whole chapters from the Book of Daniel, and tell how Vashti had offended the king Ahasuerus, and how Esther, their countrywoman, had been promoted into her place. Purim, a Babylonish feast, became their favourite festival of the year.

Arrived in the land which had once been Judah and Israel, bringing with them fresh habits, a different language, and a foreign school of thought, the Exiles found in many parts of Palestine a people claiming to be of the same lineage, following the same law, and sacrificing to the same God as themselves, who had been instructed in a yet richer art, inspired by a far nobler genius, than they had left behind in the great city of Babylon. A wave had already washed over the plains of Syria from the Grecian isles—a wave that was afterwards to become a mighty flood. Not in Tyre and Sidon, in Joppa and Acco, in Gaza and Ashdod only, had the influence of this stream from the West been felt ; but also in the hill countries and the inland cities, in Shechem and Sephoris—in some degree, perhaps, in Jerusalem itself. And since the date of that return from exile, this tide of western civilisation had been every day flowing into the land with a greater force : after the Greek conquest of Asia, it had set in with a more majestic motion than

before. Thus, the new culture which the Jews brought home from Babylon had been met and tempered by the arts of Cyprus and Antioch, until the people, nearly all of whom had now become dissenters and Separatists, passed under the persecution of Epiphanes, the revolt of Modin and the Maccabean war, into that stage of their moral and spiritual growth which brought upon them the Roman war, and led to their dispersion over the face of the earth.

Having served their country like Joshua and Gideon, the Maccabees were invited by the public voice to seize all offices and powers; to drill the armies, to instruct the priests, to inspire the schools. They were not slow to act on such a hint; and as both the army in the field, and the nation in the synagogue, with the exception of a few Sadducean priests and nobles, had become Separatists, the spirit in which the Maccabees fell to this work of drilling and instructing their people was that of the new epoch, not of the old. But whether they idolized mere rites and ceremonies, or withdrew their people from the community of nations, who could oppose them? Not their companions in glory. It was in nature that men who had fought at Beth-horon, Emmaus, and Adasa, should cling with ardour to those rites and ceremonies which Epiphanes had forbidden on pain of death. Circumcision, Sabbath observance, Temple service, having been all prohibited in the names of Zeus and Apollo, the victors of Adasa took to cherishing these rites and ceremonies, not only as parts of their ritual, but the very soul of their creed. The first act of every people restored by valour to its national life is to set up its native gods. If the Jewish hero of Beth-horon made idols of his recovered rites, as degrading to his moral nature as the worship of any marble Love or Terror to be found in the pantheons of Greece and Rome, who could restrain his martial frenzy? The nobles who rejected the Pharisaic heresy had lost all weight and influence in the camp. The Pharisee held the sword. The pontifical family had been torn by feuds, and Onias, the true high priest by succession

from the days of Aaron, had gone away to Egypt. Jacimus, a man of Aaron's line, had been appointed in his room ; but after his death, the Maccabees had left the highest office in Israel empty until more peaceful times ; when Jonathan, seizing a golden chance, went up to the Temple and assumed the pontifical robes.

The revolution had now triumphed ; the Mosaic high priest being driven away into Egypt, and a Separatist prince established on his throne.

For the first time in Israel, and contrary to all the Mosaic traditions, a king of men was made a priest of God. Other changes followed. Priests of a lower rank were appointed judges and magistrates ; a secular spirit appeared in the Temple and in the Great College ; and heavenly truths were darkened by the shadow of earthly facts. People were led to associate rank and pomp with the sacred office ; and on seeing the sacerdotal orders living in palaces, and deciding on questions of peace and war, many persons were seduced into the fatal error of interpreting the Messianic prophecies in a mundane sense.

On the other side, the royal race, remembering that they were kings of the earth, too often forgot that they were servants of God. Some of these princes, endowed with the rarest gifts of genius, ruled the country which they had saved with transcendent skill. Yet their reign, as an order of royal priests, was in the last degree barren of abiding good. It is not given to kings to reconcile God and Mammon.

Knowing that the new order of things might be contested out of the sacred books, the Separatists, who supported the new political system, took their stand on the principles of a second Law, for which they asserted an equal antiquity and authority. This writing was known at first as, "the traditions of the Elders," and, together with its later amplifications, is now called the Oral Law.

From the days of Jonathan to those of Titus the whole life of Israel, public and personal, turned on the principles of this Pharisaic code.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ORAL LAW.

THE Separatist code, called the Oral Law, which may be found rough and unready in the Mishna, was not a forgery, like the Isidorian Decretals, nor a secular work perverted to spiritual mischief like the Book of Mormon. It was a genuine growth of time and practice, like the corpus of our English non-statute law, which in the later days of Jewish independence was allowed, like very much judge-made law elsewhere, to supersede the original text. In heart and substance, this great body of jurisprudence consisted of a noble and efficient series of civil laws; but alongside of much that was noble, there was a great deal of crude and trivial matter: rules, opinions, commentaries, disputations, on the moral and ceremonial injunctions given in the Five Books of Moses; some parts of this collection being older perhaps than the reign of Cyrus; other parts going back to the Revolt of Modin; the rest having no higher antiquity than the days of Hyrcanus and Herod the Great. So long as these rules had no authority beyond what they drew from their own manifest merit, and while every Jewish school could debate and reject them, they could do no more harm than the commentaries of our own counsel on points of law, but when the Great College had pronounced these interpretations of the Law to be of equal age and repute with the Covenant itself, what evil there lay in them began to work. The Jewish lawyers made this

declaration in no uncertain terms ; for the policy, the greatness, and the safety of their new empire depended on the public acceptance of this Oral Law. They said their explanation of the Written Law had been given to Moses, who had left it, not to Aaron's line, but to Joshua the lay soldier, from whom it had come down through the judges and prophets unto the latest times. This explanation of the origin and descent of the Oral Law could have been given only to a people who had lost their language, and with it the habit of consulting their sacred books. The upper classes, having leisure for study, and continuing to speak and write Hebrew, had never adopted this theory of a double law, one written, the other traditional. The nobles knew nothing of these traditions. Yet not the less had the Oral Law become the Separatist's gospel, regulating every movement of Jewish life.

Mystery surrounded the Oral Law. The pupils of the Great College were taught to regard it as a secret no less than a sacred institute. It was a holy, incommunicable thing, never to be mentioned in a stranger's presence, never to be written in human speech. When, in progress of time, it had been reduced to writing for the use of rabbins and doctors, a curse was pronounced upon any one who should translate it into either Greek or any heathen tongue. Even among those who could read Hebrew it was not to be made a topic of common discourse. No slave was allowed to read it ; no woman, no child, was ever to learn it. A Gentile must not be told its rules and principles. Even in the household it was to be held in extremest reverence. A Jew who spent his days and nights in studying it must not discuss its doctrines with his wife. It was not to be mentioned at table ; and although it professed to be the rule of every man's life, it was never to be communicated to a servant or a girl. To teach any part of the Oral Law to a woman was a sin.

But while the study of this law was fenced around with anathemas and prohibitions, it was declared to every Jew,

above all to a canonist, that this study was a bounden duty ; for by the rules and precepts of this law he would have to regulate every action of his life, from cleaning his teeth and rinsing his hands up to the true way of keeping the yearly Passover and reciting his daily prayers.

In later times, a Jew was taught to divide his hours of study into three parts, one part of which he was to give to the Pentateuch, one to the Mishna, and one to the Gemara ; that is to say, one hour to the Pentateuch and two hours to the Talmud. In manhood he was recommended to give most of his leisure to the Talmud, leaving the Law of Moses to the young men and priests, who were supposed to be less familiar with its tenets. Of course, the Separatist law supported the new institutions in Church and State ; ruled in the Sanhedrin ; prescribed prayers and alms ; regulated the breadth of a phylactery and the thickness of a veil ; fixed the ceremonies of the new year ; directed the reading of the law ; legislated for the Sabbath and the great feasts ; ascertained the conduct of Jews to Gentiles ; inculcated due reverence from the people towards the Rabbi or Master of the Law.

In the word and in the spirit this Separatist law (as we possess it in a later form) was not unfrequently opposed to the ordinances and institutions bequeathed to Israel in the sacred books.

By the Mosaic plan, the children of Israel had been a people set apart for good ; that they might grow into a great nation and learn to serve one God ; that they might teach the true faith through facts, and prepare the Gentiles for salvation. Under the Maccabean system, the Jews appeared to the outer world of Pagan nations to be a people set apart for evil, to quarrel amongst themselves, to fall away into sects, to disgust strangers by their pretence, and provoke chastisement by their pride. Instead of being a light to the Gentiles, they were become a rock of offence.

Nothing in the covenants made by God with his people had sanctioned the idea that Hebrew and Greek were men

of different orders. Everything in those covenants had implied that Hebrew and Gentile were common children of the same God, though Israel had been chosen as the son by whom the whole family should be glorified and saved. The God of the Hebrews had been called the God of the Gentiles, and the sins of one people had been punished by Him no less sternly than those of the other. The most eminent men among the Hebrews had been friends of strangers ; marrying into their houses and bringing blessings into Israel through their wives. Rachel, Zipporah, Ruth, had been aliens in blood. Joseph had married the daughter of an Egyptian priest ; Solomon, the daughter of an Egyptian King. But under the Separatist law such friendly feelings had for a moment been put away. No new Rachel could be wooed into Israel, no second Ruth could be engrafted into the royal line ; for a law of sharp estrangement, a law hostile to strangers as strangers, had now come into force.

Many of the rules now found in the Talmud, with much of the practice based upon those rules, were the unnatural growth of persecution, misery, and war ; sudden measures adopted in the face of sudden calamities ; and, in truth, the classical writers show that on the whole a dark, unsocial spirit distinguished the Palestinian Jew in the latter ages of his national life.

Of course, when the legions were camping in Judea, and the Greeks peopling Galilee, it would not have been easy for the Jews to carry out any of the hostile provisions of their code. An alien who busied himself about their law, who observed one of their Sabbaths, who appointed for himself a holy feast, was held to be worthy of death ; but while the Romans were masters in Syria, no man could be crucified until his sentence of death had received the sanction of judges more merciful than the fanatics of the Separation. Except in popular riots, when a preacher might be stoned, or a soldier stabbed, no man, whatever his offence, could be put to death by the Jews ; yet the spirit of the Maccabean law was partial and unjust towards every one living under a

foreign flag. If a Syrian lost a camel, and a Jew found it, the Syrian could not follow and claim his own ; but when a Jew lost a camel, and a Syrian found it, the Jew could follow and recover it by force. A Jew who stole a hundred shekels from another Jew, had to pay back a hundred and twenty shekels, a fifth part of the sum stolen being paid as penalty for the wrong done ; but if a Jew stole the same amount of money from a Greek, he had to repay the hundred shekels only ; a good Gentile having, in the eyes of this law, no equal rights against a rogue of the chosen race. Again, a Jew who had slain a Greek by accident or a sudden blow, had to fly into one of the cities of refuge : Kedesh in Galilee, Shechem in Samaria, Hebron in Judea ; but a Greek who by accident or a sudden blow had killed a Jew, was considered worthy of death.

Not a word in the covenants made by God with his people sanctioned the new idea that a priest ought to exercise earthly power, either in the Sanhedrin or on the throne. In the olden time there had been no distinction between the priesthood and the people, save that of office. Israel being a kingdom of priests, all equals, all in a state of grace, none was accounted holier, none worthier, than his brethren. The sons of Aaron had been servants of God and the people ; standing at the tabernacle door ; heaping wood on the fire ; pouring oil into the golden lamp ; slaughtering the ram, the bullock, and the dove ; sprinkling the altar of burnt offerings with blood ; partaking of good men's feasts ; instructing children in the law ; purifying young mothers ; and assisting jealous husbands to detect the transgressions of their faithless wives. As an order, they had been poor and of slight account ; objects of charity rather than of dread. But the Separatist law had brought a doctrine into vogue which exalted teacher and lawyer to a rank like that enjoyed by the ulema in Stamboul, and the monsignore in Rome. In this new light, the Masters were regarded as an order of nobles ; the title of rabbi being considered as equal to that of lord. Love, respect,

obedience were to be paid to all teachers of the sacred law. A Jew was told that his highest merit was to seek their society, to invite them into his house, to court their daughters in marriage. A common Jew could not presume to salute a rabbi in the street, but must bow down before him, saying, with hushed breath and lowly reverence, "Peace be unto thee, Rabbi." A young man was taught that his first duty was to his teacher : to bear his rabbi's burden, to fetch his rabbi's drink, to load his rabbi's ass. No other duty, not even that of a son to a father, was to come between the pupil and his teacher. If a man's father and his rabbi were each in want of food, he was to feed the rabbi first ; were the two men naked, he must clothe the rabbi with his cloak ; were they taken captive, he must raise money for the rabbi, leaving the ransom of his parent to an after-time. It was a maxim in this new code of morals, that fear of the rabbi had the same purifying virtue as fear of the Lord ; and this unnatural exaltation of the canonists and lawyers, which caused them to be popularly accepted as divinely inspired teachers, led the way to a complete prostration of all independent and individual thought.

The main issues, then, as regards faith and policy in Israel, of that glorious Revolt of Modin, were the elevation of a fighting sect to power ; the general adoption of Separative principles ; the substitution of an explanatory law for the Covenant ; a change in the divine succession of high priests ; and a lawless union of the spiritual and the secular forces.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WADY ALY.

WILLING to avoid the gentry of Latrûn, who are said to be a gang of cruel thieves, we drop quietly down the hill-side and spring into our saddles just as the village dogs have found us out, and we are spurring through the rosy light towards Wady Aly before the villagers come into the open with their spears and matchlocks. A huge, square block, of ancient date, which the Arabs call Deir Eyûb, stands close to the glen, but why such a building—evidently a Crusader's fort—is called Job's convent, there is not a soul to tell. At Bab el Wady, a rough shed, kept by a fellah, offers you a little shelter, a cup of coffee, a pipe of jebilé, and even a broken chair. This shed—a rude form of the Syrian khan, caravanserai, or wayside inn—is open on three sides to the sun and rain; but a wall of loose stones serves to keep out those wolves and jackals which abound in the ravines higher up the glen, and are sometimes seen ravening about the plain. A roofed kennel is the lodging-place for women and children, who, like the men, their companions, lie in rows on the bare earth, folded in their veils and sacks. A dozen poor Jews and Arabs, two of them women, are sleeping on the ground. One wild fellow is engaged in boiling coffee, a second is making lemonade, a third is rinsing the hookahs and replenishing the bowls. A gulp of water, even though it be warm and putrid, soothes the burning tongue; but neither soft

words nor piastres will persuade these Arab peasants to give me a pail of water for Sabeah, though she is literally shedding tears of agony from thirst. The nearest well being dry, every drop of water for the hookah, the coffee, and the lemonade, must be fetched in skins, a two hours' journey. Shall an Arab give the poor man's drink to the rich man's beast?

In every part of the East, among every class of people, a man is tender to his horse, his camel, and his ass, beyond the usage of any Christian land. In Syria, a man's beast is a member of his family, to be cherished and loved in its degree as a creature given into his care by God. Sometimes Orientals carry this tenderness to excess. They have asylums for aged cats. They leave legacies to birds. Pigeons are fed from the mosque. A Turk will cross over a street to avoid waking a cur. An Arab studies painless ways of killing sheep and fish for the table. If you see a man striking a dog in Cairo or Stamboul, you may be sure he is a Frank. But, in Palestine, water is one of those gifts in which man has the first and the only indefeasible right. The present season being dry, water is scarce, and all that love can do for Sabeah is to dash upon her blistering lips a drop of lemonade. A crust of brown bread, brought in the saddle-bags from Ramleh, a slice of cold melon, a cup of black coffee, and a long pull at the hookah send us merrily away from the khan at Bab el Wady into the mountain gorge.

This Wady Aly, named after a Moslem saint, is far from being the worst ascent in Palestine; yet nothing in my own experiences of mountain paths, confined to such countries as Calabria, Granada, the hilly parts of Morocco, and the wild regions above Smyrna, has given me more than weird hints of the work to be done. There is no road at all. For a mile or more into the gorge there may be said to be a track, having shrubs on each side, and patches of maize fields to the right and left, as if little bits of the plain had come up into the hills and been kept there, and

made to bud and bloom in sport. Aged olive trees are common, also myrtles, and laurels and laurustinas. The *planta genista* grows everywhere gaily among the stones. Mounting higher and higher up the rocky stairs, you find that the maize becomes thinner, the hawthorn and ilex and dwarf oak become more abundant. Now we are moving along the bed of a torrent ; the face of the rock, in its natural cleavage, shining on the surface. At every third step Sabeah pauses, strides, and slips. In a hundred places boulders and broken earth block up the road, while here and there the luxuriant ilex spreads like a net from one side to another of the narrow glen. What a lair for Disma, and for men of his trade !

A small, strong watch-tower, built by the Turks some nine or ten years ago, stands here and there on a controlling ledge ; but the soldiers who ought to be on duty in the pass appear to have been drafted away from these humble forts, either to defend Suraya Pasha in Jerusalem, or to swell the battalions launched in pursuit of Akeel Aga. Every mile of the ascent becomes lonelier and more difficult. We pass a string of camels, an Arab and his son, a rabbi on a donkey ; we meet a band of returning pilgrims ; but as a rule, the glen climbing up from Modin toward Zion and Bethlehem, though it is at first lovely and full of flowers, grows strangely silent and impressive as we rise above the lower range of heights and begin to reach an elevation of two thousand or two thousand five hundred feet. Not a hamlet, not a house, not a mill, not a garden is now seen. Some of the rounded hills look trim and terraced, as if for vines ; on every knoll stands the ruin of a convent or a mosque ; but the tropical vegetation of the plain near Ramleh and Modin has given place to a flora more homely and familiar to our eyes ; a flora in which the holm-oak, arbutus, thorn, and holly, sweep you back in fancy to the mountains of Killarney and South Wales.

Turning in our saddles towards the west, we find that the sea is full in sight ; the dear, domestic sea, with its happy surprise and delicious dream of home.

On the first great ridge of hill stands an Arab ruin, Beit Fejjôl ; near to which, on our right, is Sâris, a tiny hamlet, with a well and garden. Crossing the chain a little above Sâris, we leave the Wady Aly and the lair of Disma in our rear, and, with our faces full in the sunshine, pick our way slowly and on foot down the sides of a precipitous valley, in the soft limestone stairs of which dropping road even our Arab mares cannot keep their feet. In front of us rise two peaks ; to the right, Sôba ; to the left, Beit Nakûbeh. Below, the valley spreads itself broad and open ; a white track running through it like a stream ; domes and mounds of earth rising round it, and appearing to inclose it in their arms. Half hidden in the shadow of the mountain, shines a bold and beautiful hamlet, strong and of stone, the houses of which are large and well built, the grapes and figs abundant, with a mosque, a fountain, and the shell of a Gothic church. The village seems to be waking into life. A camel is plodding along the road, a sheikh is kneeling at prayer on a house-top, a damsel is carrying water from a well. Yet this smiling hamlet, with its poetical Arab name of Kuryet el 'Enab—Village of Vines—and its softly tranquil aspect, is no other place than the mountain aërie of that infamous bandit, Abu Gosh.

In front of the church (a shell, still perfect, of Italian or Spanish Gothic, once a chapel of crusading kings, and now a cattle-shed and rope-walk for the bandits) lies a square inclosure of rude stones, in which grow a few aged trees. This is another of the roadside inns, at which the pilgrim sits for an hour, resting his horse, and eating his simple meal. Before Ishmael can spread a yard of carpet on the ground, Arab girls bring jars of water, and a sheikh comes down from the village to smoke a pipe of jebilé and demand a bak-sheesh, his tributary tip—courtesies and gifts which a prudent pilgrim should not refuse. A dozen piastres will make you lord of this valley, for the sheikh is no longer a prince at the head of a thousand spears, making war on his neighbour and taking tribute from the Pasha of Jerusalem. The pride of

Abu Gosh has been broken, and his name is now but a terror of the past. Yet when you are riding through a wild ravine, where every man carries a gun, it is well to be at peace with the ruling sheikh.

While Ishmael lays the cloth and spreads the repast of hard eggs and chicken, of brown bread, oranges, and grapes, there is time for a stroll ; so, just to stretch our limbs, we climb up the steep streets of the Village of Vines, admiring its luscious fruit, and cooling our temples in the shade of its Christian porch, thinking of the old, old story of the place now known to Arab peasants as the robbers' lair : remembering how, before the children of Jacob subdued the land, it was already a famous and sacred town—a town, not a hamlet, as its most ancient name implies, (Kirjath Baal, City of Baal, being a holy place of the immodest Canaanite god, which the Hebrews, when it fell to the lot of Judah, changed to Kirjath Jearim, City of Forests) ; how the six hundred Danites from Zorah and Eshtaol pitched their tents on this slope before going up to Mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, whence they stole the ephod, the teraphim, and the molten image, before setting out on their treacherous raid against Laish ; how the ark of God, when fetched by the despairing Israelites from Shiloh, and being taken from them in fight by the Philistines, was set up in the great temple of Dagon, at Ashdod, was sent away from Ashdod to Gath, from Gath to Ekron, from Ekron to Beth-Shemesh, and, on the prayer of the people of Beth-Shemesh, was brought up the hills and left on this mountain side in the care of Eleazar, son of Aminadab, for twenty years, until it was carried away by David to the holy hill.

That raid of the Danite band, so much like one of Abu Gosh's marauding forays, left its trace in the popular mind ; and long after the men of Zorab and Eshtaol had settled down on the fields of Laish, the spot on which they had here pitched their temporary tents was known as Mahaneh-Dan, the camp of Dan. Three thousand years after the death of Micah, a similar cause produced a similar effect in

the same valley ; and the Village of Vines is now known to the wandering Arabs by no other name than that of the marauder, Abu Gosh.

Returning to our rude khan, and sitting down in the shadow of our tree, we find the eggs and fowls ready, and the grave young sheikh enjoying his pipe. Inviting him to share our meal, we fall on the bread and fowls ; but, either from pride or modesty, he declines ; though accepting a melon, a loaf of convent bread, and a little more tobacco. Giving the fragments of bread and fruit to the poor, taking a mouthful of cognac, with a last pull at the water-jar, we climb into the hot saddle, bidding the sheikh adieu ; on which he mournfully waves his hand, as if dreaming sadly of those days (a dozen years past) when no Frank could have ridden from that khan until his saddle-bags had been searched and lightened of their weight.

Passing a dry fountain in the hollow, we begin to ascend the steep. Sôba is everywhere in sight ; a noble cone, of stupendous strength, crowned by a fort which Mohammed Ali destroyed, and Abu Gosh rebuilt. Crossing a higher ridge of the hill, having the ruins of Kûstûl, a Crusader's castle, possibly a Roman fort, on our right, we plunge down a steep and rocky pass into a dry ravine, in the bed of which, as it flows into the great Wady Beit Hanina, bloom a few small pleasure gardens, with a crop of delicious apples, grapes, and pomegranates, among which an Arab family boil and vend coffee, and supply red charcoal for the hookah and chibouque. These gardens have abundant water. Close to the road stand the ruins of a Christian church, only less strong and noble than the shell at Abu Gosh. A few strides further down the glen a Roman bridge spans a rivulet of stones, which in the rainy season may become a flood. On a high promontory, above the junction of two glens, and looking down into a productive bottom, perches the strong stone village of Kûlonieh, evidently Colonia, a Roman station. Signs of life now reappear ; fellahs are seen building houses, women shaking olives, children running about

the orchards, and the whole rich valley is alive and bright. On the space now covered by these gardens, walls, and ruins, that village of Emmaus, sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, into which the Master walked with Cleophas and the disciples, is supposed to have stood. It is one of the loveliest spots in the hill country of Judea.

Ascending from this valley, you leave the fig trees and olive trees behind. The hills are still terraced for vines ; but the aspect of nature grows more stern, and bare, and monotonous, as you climb up towards the high table-land of Zion and Olivet. On your right, up a wild glen, shines the convent of Ain Karim, built on the spot where Elizabeth is said to have dwelt, and where John the Baptist, by some accounts, was born ; a spring of water flowing at her door, and the face of her country being soft and green. Sôba and Neby Samuel still appear to rise above all the hills of Judah. The road goes zig-zag over the limestone rock, the waste and stones increasing as you approach the Holy City. Vegetation almost ceases ; in a cleft you may find a bramble, and in some happy hollow you may descry an olive ; but the rule is otherwise. Rock, white and blinding, rock broken into fragments, rock burnt into powder, stretches before you and behind. At length, when the long reach of wall, twining gloriously rugged and picturesque round the bases of cathedral, synagogue, and mosque, appears in sight, the eye clings fondly to the figure of a single palm, shooting gracefully up from a garden in the city near the Bethlehem gate ; and on the right, in a deep natural trough, to an olive plantation, in the midst of which nestles the Convent of the Cross. The aspect of the land is stern and desolate, and the great city itself seems to spring from the centre of a rolling plateau of stones and graves.

CHAPTER X.

THE HILL COUNTRY.

TO men who rise early and ride hard, who expect their dinner at noon, and enjoy their sleep at night, the hill country of Judah offers but a lenten bait. Clean sheets, old wine, and toothsome chicken, are things unknown to the sacred soil, and it is well, dear friend, that you should know it, so as not to waste time on the impossible—as in waiting for wings to grow and in crying for the moon. Judah is bare. Dreams of good eating should have been left behind, not in the plains merely, but beyond the sea. When you are about to leave Venice or Vienna, for that Morning Land of which these two cities are the golden gates, it may be wise to learn by sharp self-scrutiny and trial, to what extent, if to any, your nature has become pledged to its corporal wants. Are you steel like a Brahmin? are you wax like a Sybarite? If on trial you should prove to be one of those men who must either eat, drink, and sleep, or else fret in spirit and fade in cheek, give up your dream of travelling in the Holy Land. Among these hills of Judah, where the bread is not always white, the grapes not always sweet, you would pine for the flesh-pots of Egypt and the vintages of France. Either the Albergo Europa, or the Erz Herzog Karl,—with a morning skim over the Lagoon, an afternoon prance through the Prater—with music in the piazza or the burg after dinner—is your congenial heaven. If, on such trial, you should find that nature is so strong, habit so weak, that

you can live without sleep, then come as you list to either Cairo or Stamboul; to which the food and drink of the West can be brought to your table in boat and train. Should your palate prove to be king, tempt neither the sands of El Arish



HILL COUNTRY OF JUDEA.

nor the convents of Judah; sit down under the palms of Usbeyah, and dream among the glories of Seraglio Point. But if you find that you can royally dismiss the rabble of appetites, shed them at once; ride up through the wastes into this high land of Judea; and at the gates of Jerusalem choose for yourself a home in which you will dwell.

Shall it be with the Spanish friars of San Salvador on Mount Gareb, the Armenian monks of St. James on Mount Zion? Will you try the house of a regenerate Jew in Christian street? Or, turning your back on cell and chamber, will you encamp like a Bedaween, pitching your canvas on the slope of Mount Olivet? Each plan has its own virtue. Living in the city you will be hunted by rats and snakes, mosquitoes and fleas; on the hill-side you may be pilfered by the children of Abu Dis. Most men prefer enemies which they can see and fight. You will have been a lucky fellow, if on trying the city for a week, you do not fly from the mercies of civilization to the freedom of your Arab tent.

As we ride up towards the Bethlehem gate, the crowds of Jews and Greeks, Arabs and Armenians, seem to be crazed as with the panic of sword and fire. Waves of excited men come billowing round our stirrups. Can we give them no news? Has not Ramleh been sacked? Are not the Anezi at Latrûn? Is there no movement at Abu Gosh? The people appear to be amazed at our having come up the wady without being robbed. Our luggage ought to have been rifled, our throats ought to have been cut. In truth, the robbery and death of the Frank physician, a deed of violence which, being done near their own doors on the body of a man whom everybody knew by sight, was an event to kindle imaginations apt by nature and trained by custom to take fire.

A Syrian, be he Jew or Moslem, cannot help thinking of a Frank as of a being set apart; for does he not see in this pale face from the West a man of mysterious wealth and ascendancy, one to whom pashas are polite, and of whom Bedaween sheikhs are afraid? The Frank may be a giaour, an effreet, a son of Shaitan; yet to him has been given (for God is great, and his ways are wonderful) money and steam, the power of the earth and the power of the air. He is rich, he is mighty—on the whole he is just. To him, says the Arab proverb, belong the word of command and the use of the stick.

A Syrian peasant would no more dream of returning a blow from a Frank than a soldier would dare to return a slap from a pasha. At Acre, I have seen an English middy slash through a crowd of Arabs, many of them armed, the boy shouting and hitting to his right and left in animal gaiety and sport. On Mount Zion, I have seen a little German lad, a servant in a hospice, rush out of his door, and lay a stick on the backs of a dozen grown-up Jews, all of them with manly and some of them venerable beards. Indeed, the reverence which in the fancy of a Syrian clings to his white brother, is akin to that divinity which in the middle ages and in the language of poetry hedged a king. But, if it is rare for a Frank to be assailed by an Arab, it is still more rare for him to lose his life. As a rule, the Frank carries so little coin, is so well armed, is so expert with his weapon, and so sure in his seat, that the boldest thieves are daunted by his confidence ; for even when he is met in the desert, away from all succour, and at the mercy of a swarthy host, he will still show fight, and if forced into defence he will either maim a man for life, or injure a mare more precious than a man. Nor is this the end of it, as it would be of an ordinary fray. Whether a Frank gets the Bedaween's blood, or the Bedaween gets a Frank's purse, there is no way of hushing the matter up, and of covering the deed with a little sand. The consul worries his pasha, the pasha sends out his Bashi Bazouks, the Bashi Bazouks harry the tribes, and when they have tracked the offenders home to their black tents, the government lays so many fines, and seizes so many camels and horses, that the robbery of a Frank has of late years come to be a perilous and unprofitable game.

The physician's death is therefore a portent and a sign. The old bonds seem loosened. If such a man were not safe in the hill country, who could believe himself safe ? Would a consul protect a poor Jew ? Would Suraya send out troops to avenge the death of a woodman, of a muleteer ?

Other stories are afloat: of fires in Esdraelon, of robberies in Samaria, of bloodshed and revolt in Hebron. Black tents, it is alleged, can be seen from high roofs and from convent walls. The Taámra, a tribe of Bedaween holding the hill country from Bethlehem to the Dead Sea, are said to be astir. Bands of the Adouan and Salhaan Arabs are reported coming up the Wady Cedron; Suraya is said to have sent troops into the district round Hebron; the Nabulus road is stopped, even to camel-drivers and the mounted post; and no ordinary news has come in from Nazareth for a month. Only the poorest Arabs go about with their donkeys. Yakoub protests against pitching our tents beyond the city walls; but for once in his life he is forced to give way.

Though nothing appears to be changed in the usual aspects of Jerusalem, the Greek prior was right in saying that the Holy City might be described as being in a state of siege, for all these hill towns in Judea are governed by martial law.

How, indeed, could a city like Jerusalem exist, unless it were governed with the sword?

It is a garrison town, with an enemy always at the gate. Look out from the dome of this little Mosque on Olivet:—you are dwelling on the skirt of a great wilderness, face to face with those wild hordes of the tent who have never yet been either broken into keeping rules, persuaded into growing their own corn and lentils, or caught and confined within city walls. From this dome you may peer down into the blue depths of the Dead Sea, sweep along the Jordan valley and up the mountain lines of Moab; and you know that in the vast countries lying between the Jordan and the Euphrates, countries larger than France and Italy, no law is acknowledged in practice save that of the stealthy hand and the smiting sword. Time never was in which the men living in tents did not envy and hate the men living in towns; in which the wandering tribes did not bear up against the settlers in cities, spoiling their habitations, carry-

ing away their corn, levying ransom on their heads. Many of these dwellers in tents, the Anezi, the Shammar, the Mowali, and the Salhaan tribes, are mounted, all of them are armed. In firing from the saddle they have few equals, in thrusting with the lance they have none. No king has ever counted their numbers; the Anezi alone make a nation; the Beni Sakkr are a mighty host; and the associates of their sheikhs declare that if summoned by their Holy Caliph to defend their faith against the giaours, they could send fifty thousand spears into the field. These formidable hosts may be described as at all times camping round Jerusalem and surging against its gates. The Adouan have an agent at Abu Dis, and the Taámra pitch their tents in the wadies near the walls on every side. Would the city be safe without a vigilant observance of martial law?

From our little camp on the Mount of Olives, pitched on the northern slope under the Church of the Ascension, we ride through the hill country to Hebron and Bethel, to Ain Karim and Mar Saba, to Neby Samuel and Bethlehem, ever glad to come back to the holy mount, where we never tire of enjoying the beauty of its scenery and the coolness and freedom of our Arab tent.

CHAPTER XI.

ROAD TO HEBRON.

RIDING along the stony track above Solomon's Pools, on the main road from Ain Karim to Hebron and Egypt, we observe a cloud of dust rising in our front ; a cloud of dust which appears to be in rapid and boisterous motion, parting and shining near the ground, as with the flashing of swords and spears. Are they soldiers, are they Arabs ? Are they fighting or flying, drilling or playing ? Yakoub is at fault ; for the dust of their feet clouds high and thick above them, and only a glitter of steel comes fitfully through the haze. Pulling up our mares, we hold on by the path, each with one hand on the revolver, another tight on the rein, ready for events, in case we may have to defend our lives. In a moment they are on us—past us—heated and furious, smashing the rocks and shedding sparks from their hoofs ; thirty or forty Bashi Bazouks, with sabres whirling and horses foaming ; five or six empty saddles in their ranks ; in the men's looks that fierce animal light which is said to fill a soldier's eyes in the agony of mortal strife. Yakoub shouts to them as they plunge along—who are they—whither are they flying—where is the foe ? They neither check their speed nor answer to the call ; driven on, it would seem, by an unseen dread. As we stand up in our stirrups, gazing after them in their flight, they sink into a hollow near Bethlehem, the stony road covers them up from

our sight, and we see them no more. Like a gust of wind through the glen, they came and they are gone.

What shall we do next? Is it right to push on to Hebron? Are the Bashi Bazouks whom we have just seen, reeling and broken from some fierce encounter, the troops whom Suraya Pasha had sent into the Hebron district to quell the Arab population? If so, and Yakoub has no doubt of it, a retreating mob of light horse, with half a dozen empty saddles, does not answer very strongly for his success. The Maronite looks pale, and even Saïd's black face wears a waxen tinge. But where is Ishmael of the piastres, now increased to a score? At Ain Karim we put the imp on a donkey, and now, while we are gazing after the Bashi Bazouks, he slips away, and getting half a mile in advance, and being deaf to all cries and shouts, he manages, like a wayward child in a wood, to govern our adventures, and lead us whither he will.

On the hill-top beyond Etam we ride into the field of battle, and pull up our horses among the dying and the dead. These are but two in all; two youthful Bedaween, in their coarse grey shirts and leathern girdles, with bright shawls and fillets round their brows, and two or three gaudy pistols lying near them on the ground. One poor fellow has a slit across his throat, the wound jobbed and gashed, not delicately cut; the youth is dead as the dust among which he lies. His companion, having a ball in his chest, is bleeding rapidly away. By their garb they are evidently sheikhs; but their game of life is over; and whatever may have been the stake for which they played, they have thrown and lost. Traces of a sharp, short struggle lie about in the road: some bits of rope, some wadding, a pistol, a broken lance, and pieces of splintered rock. Scarcely have we time to observe these signs of the past onset, when a swarm of horsemen, capped with gay shawls, brandishing long lances, sweep around us, eager and electric as a summer cloud. A few sentences from Yakoub and Ishmael tell them who we are: an English prince, a cousin

of the Great Queen, a friend of Arabs and Mussulmans, going up to Hebron, into the country of the great sheikh, to see the cave of Machpelah and recite a prayer beneath Abraham's oak. Saluting the sheikh, a fine old fellow, with a grizzly, not an ample beard, I desire that between the English and the Bedaween there shall be peace in the future as there has been peace in the past. At the name of England the sheikh bows his head, in token of peace, and turns to his nephew, the dying man.

Some who are bending above the youth appear to catch what he says ; but his words are few ; and while the life is ebbing fast from his heart, the old sheikh sits bolt upright in his saddle, silent and stern, with an awful fire in his Arab eyes. When the ebb is past and the suffering has ceased, he whispers a few commands ; two horses are brought round to where the bodies lie ; the dead sheikhs are laid across them, and their venerable uncle accepts from his servant a lighted pipe. All being ready to move, the old man bids us join his party, and proceed to the oak of Abraham in his train.

From this aged sheikh, who remembers with a bitter rage the wars of Mohammed Ali in Syria, when the Arab camps were broken up, the flocks devoured by strangers, and the black tents driven away beyond Jordan into the great Desert, I learn many things ; among others, that the Saxon and the Arab are brethren, and that the English are white Moslems of a Western sect. On these two points the sheikh is beyond reach of evidence. Who is the Arab's best friend ? Who are the Caliph's firm allies ? When the Latin Christians came into the Lebanon, who sent out fire-ships and chased them away ? When the Greek Christians crossed over the Danube on their way to Stamboul, who beat them back into the ice and snow ? When Ibrahim Pasha was at Acre, beating the Shammar and Anezi into the Euphrates, who cannonaded the Egyptian out of Syria ? Who permitted the Shammar and Anezi to return ? When Bonaparte and the Franks came into Palestine, taking their

best lands from the tribes, who fought against the Franks and drove them into Egypt and the sea? Always the same English Arabs, always the same white Moslems of the west.

From him, too, we hear the whole story of Suraya's attempt to cow the Esau spirit now glowing in southern Judea; the high seat of which is at Hebron, a holy place in the opinion of both the Moslem and the Jew.

The Arabs of this wild and difficult country, while bowing to the Sultan as their spiritual lord, pay as little respect to his temporal rights as the Italians of Genoa do to those of their Pope. For the most part they are a pastoral people, dwelling in tents, driving their camels and goats, their asses and kine, from wady to wady in search of food; living like their foregoers Abraham and Lot in the same country, with their children, their kinsmen, and their slaves in tents, and owning no masters under heaven, except disease and death. Of the great Sultan in Stamboul they have only a faint and vague idea; a ghostly and spiritual, rather than a mortal dread. When an imperial hatt, or edict, is promulgated in the Caliph's name, they hold themselves free to obey it or reject it, as they please; for the spirit which inspires that edict is too far off for their comprehension, while the voice which commands its execution is only that of Suraya, an intruder and an alien in their land.

A very unpopular hatt has been sent down from Jerusalem to Hebron, for the instant levy of a number of men; for the new Sultan, Abdul Aziz, being a soldier, a statesman, a patriot, a man of large views and of masculine energies, has resolved, amongst other reforms of the seraglio and the state, on raising his army to a high degree of excellence and strength. From Belgrade to Bagdad, every town, every province of the empire, has been commanded to raise its quota of men by a given day; among the rest, the Pashalic of Saida, including the whole province of Palestine. Now, the Bedaween, having never yet been broken into the habit of either living in his own house, or cultivating his own field, has an elfish dislike to drilling and marching, to staying in one

place, to keeping regular hours, and to obeying the word of command. He is a wild man, to whom a city is a prison, a companion a spy. So, when the hatt came from Stamboul to Jerusalem to raise troops, and Suraya sent it down to Hebron and other quarters, the Bedaween sheikhs received it in silence, and laid it aside, saying their sons should not serve and their horses should not be seized. At the first roll of the drum the young men fled into the wilderness. Below the town, on the green slope near the great pools of Hebron, stood the Sultan's white tents ; above which the red banner drooped, and the silver crescent sparkled ; but the sheikhs having set their faces against this levy, none of their young men joined the standard, and the Caliph's tribute of heroes remains unpaid.

What could Suraya do? Abdul Aziz, who commenced his reign by putting away the odalisques of his hareem, by burning down his seraglio, by exchanging his crown jewels for ships of war, is not a master to be balked of his due. Those who know the new Caliph say that his will is strong, that his hand is prompt, that day and night he dreams of war, his only music being a rolling drum, his chief delight in reviewing troops. Is such a prince likely to go without his share of Arabs, and permit the servant who fails him in duty to live and thrive? In the midst of Suraya's troubles came the bad news from Galilee, telling him of the revolt of Akeel Aga, and the disturbances near Nazareth. Thinking it became him to act with vigour, lest a local disturbance in Galilee should grow into an Arab rising, and finding that my aged but not venerable friend had been one of the busiest in resisting the royal hatt, Suraya despatched a company of Bashi Bazouks, instructed to ride swiftly and secretly to their post ; to suffer no man to pass them on the road ; to come upon the black tents in the night ; to invite the sheikh, together with his sons and nephews, to a parley at the Serai ; to use violence only in the last resort ; but in any case, freely or by force, to bring the sheikhs to Suraya's residence on the Temple hill. A part of their work was

promptly done. Surrounded in the night, surprised by a message which he could neither evade nor resist, the old Arab thought it best to obey cheerily, as though he suspected no evil, and went along of his own good-will. He asked the captain on duty for his pass. When a Bedouin sheikh is called up from the country into a garrison town, it is usual for the Pasha to send him a safe-conduct, which, for the Arab's satisfaction, is commonly signed either by a foreign consul or the prior of a convent, the signature of an English agent being the one most eagerly sought and most thoroughly esteemed. The officer had only Suraya's pass to show; a circumstance highly suspicious in the Arab's eyes; but seeing himself hemmed round by troops, unable either to escape or resist, the old man pretended that the pass was enough to assure him of the Pasha's good faith.

The sheikhs were allowed to keep their arms, and to ride their own mares; they were only asked to make haste. So soon as they were mounted the horsemen closed around them, as an escort or a guard, and while the darkness of night still hung over the tents, the company wheeled round some houses and gardens and began their march towards Jerusalem, which city they might have reasonably hoped to reach about noon. Some dogs, awakened by the clatter of hoofs on the road, set up a cry, in which other dogs joined them, until the whole country seemed to be rousing itself into a dismal howl. The sheikhs took heart at the sound, for they knew that the Arab camps would soon be astir; that news of their seizure would spread; that their friends would muster and give chase. To gain a little time was to gain a fair chance of rescue. A jerk of the rein brought the old man's horse to its knees, and the cavalcade to a pause. A few moments were gained; but the Bashi Bazouks, seeing that the stumble was a feint to gain time, drew closer round the sheikhs, whom they now began to treat as prisoners rather than as guests.

Arabs, though they ride fast and well, take a long while to muster, and the sheikhs, though as well armed and mounted

as the Bashi Bazouks, pay them the compliment of seldom assailing them under an advantage of ten to one ; but in the bottom of a deep glen, called the Wady Ariub, among fragments of rock and stones, the troops were suddenly beset by a cloud of men in the dark night, when their loose line was broken, and before they could rally and form the enemy was gone. Not a shot had been fired, not a thrust had been made. Eight or ten men had been rolled over by the shock, but no bones had been broken in the fray. When they had again fallen into line, to resume their march, three saddles were found empty, and three of their five prisoners had disappeared. Hopeless of recovering their lost sheikhs, and certain that the Bedaween would return on finding that in the darkness and confusion of the night they had left two of their sheikhs and three of their mares behind, the Bashi Bazouks, drawing their swords and closing their ranks, rode faster and faster as the day began to dawn. The Arab youths, now hugged in their midst, felt sure of the doom awaiting them in Jerusalem ; the resistance and the rescue adding heavy weight to their previous sins ; and they attempted, once too often, to arrest the pace at which they were being hurried to a shameful end. Then, a little above Etam, on the wild and lonely hill-top, had occurred a sharp and sanguinary deed—a throat had been jobbed through with steel, a bosom had been pierced with lead, and two swarthy young Bedaween had been tumbled from their saddles into the Hebron road.

CHAPTER XII.

BETHLEHEM.

RETURNING from Hebron by the way of Solomon's Pools, we rest for a while at the Latin convent near Bethlehem; an hospice which has replaced in that village the more ancient Hebrew khan.

From the guest-room of this convent you look out upon the ridge and shoulder of the hill on which Ephrath, which is Bethlehem, stands. This hill holds no high place among the hills of Judah; it is, in fact, narrow and depressed. Gedor, Gibeah, and Mar Elias, close it round on every side—save only that which falls away into the Wady Cedron, towards the deep chasm of the Dead Sea. The Mount of Paradise looks down upon it from the south, and Neby Samuel soars above it to the north. From all these prouder and more lonely heights, the eye can sweep, either, on one hand, down to the Jordan banks, or, on the other hand, across the plain of Sharon, past Gath and Lydda, into the lustrous bays of Ascalon and Joppa. Bethlehem has no such range to boast. On every side but one some peak or spur obstructs the view: Mar Elias and the Greek convent on its crest hiding the one view which every eye most seeks—the road to Zion and the Mount of Olives. A string of gardens, a few steep fields, much crossing of white roads, so many that the point of junction may be called the Place of Paths, a glen which drops by leaps and steps to the great Cedron valley, make the landscape. Yet the slope which

is thus bound in by higher tops and more barren crests has a winning beauty of its own, a joyous promise of bread and fruit, which puts it first among the chosen places of Judea. Nor can it be truly said that all this beauty is borrowed from either the pastorals of Rachel, Ruth, and David, or from the epical events of that night when the shepherds in yon fields were startled by hearing the angelic psalm. Some part of the attraction springs, no doubt, from holy associations, from that abiding poetry on which our youth is fed. Who, in truth, could gaze unmoved upon the fields in which Boaz reaped his corn, the slopes on which David kept his sheep, the road along which the Virgin and her husband toiled, the country in which the shepherds held their watch by night? But even to those who came to Ephrath in the earliest times, like Jacob on his way from Bethel, like Saul on going down to Engedi, this lovely and fruitful slope, with its springs of sweet water and its ample rows of oak, must have offered an abiding charm.

Facing to the south and east, its gardens glow in the heat of noon, and its white stone houses seem ablaze with light. The vines, the fig trees, and the olive trees love the soil; the grapes have a strong, sweet pulp, of an aromatic taste; and the green figs of Bethlehem have a flavour which they who have eaten them will remember as an Egyptian is said to recollect the Nile. A dark ruddy loam, which the Arab tillers call the Good Earth, lies bright in the clefts and furrows of these rocks, ready to receive, and spongy to retain, the quickening autumnal shower. From the fact of fields being rare in this sterile zone, yon few grey patches sinking off towards the wilderness and the Mount of Paradise, give a character, that of corn-land, to the country side, as well as an auspicious name to the sacred town. The old word, Ephrath, meant Place of Fruit; the newer word, Bethlehem, means House of Bread: one following on the other, as barley and maize come after grapes and figs, and the sower of grain succeeds to the breeder of goats and kine. The little bit of plain through which Ruth gleaned after the young

men, together with a level of stony ground here and there in the glen towards Mar Saba, are the only corn-lands occurring in the hill country of Judea for many a league. Thus it happened that the city which grew up beside these fields and enjoyed their produce came to be known among the roving tribes of Palestine, first as the Place of Fruit, and afterwards, when the land was settled and the seed trampled into the ground, as the House of Bread. These ruts and tracks over the hill country, though white and scorched by the desert sun, are not, in their caves and orchards, without many a nook of pleasant and welcome shade. In short, in the one word which to a Syrian ear would express every beauty and grace of heaven, the hill of Bethlehem, in this torrid clime, in the midst of these arid wastes, is almost *green*.

On the south front of this teeming slope, looking over to the Shepherd's Tower, with the hot wilderness and the Dead Sea below, stand, as they stood in the days when Samuel came up from Gilgal to choose a king from among the tribe of Judah, groups and clusters of white cubes, called houses, ranged on the sides of a long, narrow street or lane, which, starting from the ridge, and jerking and twisting down the hill for about half a mile, sends off court and alley to the right and left, not into fields or into other streets and lanes, but, by bends and turns, up to garden-gates and doorways, and to stone huts and caves in the rock.

This lovely green ridge of Bethlehem is the scenery of some of our most tender and gracious poems : the idyls of Rachel, of Ruth, of Saul, of David, of Chimham, of Jeremiah, of the Virgin-mother ; the subjects of these poems being the foremost passages in Israel's religious life.

The first of these Hebrew idyls is the death of Rachel. The tale is so ancient that it carries you back to a time when, as yet, the Hebrews were not, and Bethlehem was not. The green ridge of hill, with its avenues of oak, its gardens of grapes and olives, was then a possession of the Canaanites, in whose idiom it was called Ephrath, the Place

of Fruit. The Jebusites held the neighbouring rock of Zion ; and sheikhs from beyond Jordan pitched their black tents around its springs, and lodged their cattle in its caves. Jacob, one of these sheikhs, a man who had been dwelling in the Hauran, the country of his uncle Laban, where he had served fourteen years for his two wives, Leah and Rachel, was journeying along this stony track from Bethel, he and his wives and their little ones, his man-servants and maid-servants, a great host, with a train of camels, a herd of ewes and rams, a flock of steers and milch kine, and multitudes of goats. The sheikh was going up to Hebron, where Isaac, his father, dwelt. But Rachel, his younger and more beloved wife, then great with child for the second time, fainted with the pangs of motherhood as the camels drooped down the sharp ridge of Mar Elias into the green country ; and the throes of birth coming fast upon her, she died as her son, whom she called Benoni, child of her sorrow, and her husband called Benjamin, son of his right hand, was being born into the world.

“And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem : and Jacob set a pillar upon her grave.” The death of Rachel, the dearly-loved wife, the typical mother of Israel, lent an abiding poetry to Bethlehem ; consecrating, as it were, the soil of Ephrath to the royal line ; her burial on the green ridge, in the shade of fig trees and olives, making the spot holy for ever in the eyes of all her race.

Three thousand five hundred years have elapsed since Jacob set up the pillar above Rachel's grave ; but the memorial stones are still here, protected by Moslem piety ; a Saracenic dome covering that which in the eyes of every Jew is the most sacred dust in the Holy Land.

The second idyl is that of Ruth. The Book of Ruth presents a picture of the place in which the uncrowned line of Judah had come to dwell. It is a stony country, with its green ascent discernible from afar by the huge fig trees, and by the white pillar set up over Rachel's grave. The plain

between Ephrath and the Mount of Paradise stands on the very border of the Desert ; the springs are few, though the waters which well from them are pure and sweet. A year of dearth—a thing not rare either then or now in Judea—will drain the wells and consume the verdure to its roots. Four or five years of scanty rain suffice to bring famine into the land. It was such a dearth that had sent Abraham from Bethel down into Egypt, that had driven Isaac into the plain of Gerar, that had caused the ten sons of Jacob to repair to their brother whom they had sold into bondage : and so it had happened once again in the days of the Judges, in the generation of Boaz the son of Salmon, that there came a long drought on the hill-sides of Judah, and the corn-fields of the Plain below the town, and of the wadies near it, were parched and dry. Now, as Isaac, when he was pinched for food, had gone down into the low lands of Gerar towards the sea-shore, so Elimelech the Bethlehemite, a kinsman of Boaz, had looked out, in this new day of scarcity, from the city in which there was no bread, towards the abounding fields of Moab, the mountains of which country he could see from the house-top. That land of plenty was the land of his fathers ; and there he might hope to eat and live. So, taking with him Naomi, his wife, with Mahlon and Chilion, his two sons, he had passed out from Ephrath, through the wilderness, going beyond the Dead Sea into Moab, where he had dwelt until he died. His two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, taking wives, Orpah and Ruth, from the women of that country, had dwelt there until they also died. Then Naomi rose up, and, hearing news that the Lord had visited her people with rain, and had given them bread once more, said she would now return to her own city. Orpah, the widow of Chilion, kissed her and went back ; but Ruth, the widow of Mahlon, clave to Naomi, and would not leave her, saying, “ Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee : for whither thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge : thy people shall be my people, and thy God

my God." And so, in the early spring days, when even the Desert hills are alive with the green of herbs and shrubs, the two women who were to renew the blood of Judah, and in whose posterity the whole earth was to be one day blessed, came up from Moab, through the ways of the wilderness, to a city which knew them not. Is this Naomi? The woman was proud and wretched, and she answered her questioners in wrath. But Ruth, the Moabitish damsel at her side, was soft and comely, of a tenderness and a beauty strange among the Hebrews. Perhaps she was fair, like her descendant David, who had light eyes and a rosy cheek; and like Solomon, his son, whose skin is said to have been ruddy and white, and his eyes like doves' eyes washed with milk. By the law of Moses, Ruth could have claimed that her husband's next of kin should receive her and take her home to be his wife; but being gentle and good as she was comely, she would not force him to do her right. When April was come, and the barley harvest ripe for the sickle, the fair woman went down into yon fields of the plain by the Shepherd's Tower to glean after the reapers, trusting in the Lord. Boaz, who was Mahlon's uncle, though not his next of kin, coming down from his house at Bethlehem into the fields, which were his own, said to his servants, as a sheikh going down to the harvest would say to his men even now, "The Lord be with you;" and the reapers answered "The Lord bless thee."

When Boaz saw his kinswoman in the field among the reapers, he spoke softly to her, bidding her glean after his men, and keep by the side of his maidens; inviting her, when she was thirsty, to go up to the pitchers and drink of the water which his people had drawn for their own use; not being afraid, as he should command his servants not to molest her, or to put any shame upon her. At meal-times he bade her come into the shady place, where the reapers sat with him at meals, and there eat of the bread and the parched corn, and dip her morsel into the vinegar set before them. It was the dawn of a new love in the old man's heart.

When the barley harvest was gone by, and even the wheat harvest had been garnered in, as Boaz slept in the threshing-floor, Ruth, by the counsel of her mother-in-law, Naomi, threw herself upon her kinsman's grace. The old man's soul was touched, for he knew what the law commanded him to do—him after the next of kin—and he loved the fair stranger who had left behind her in Moab her country and her gods. So, when it was day, he went up from his house to the city gate, and, sitting down in the shade of the arch, called to him the ten elders of Bethlehem and the man who was Mahlon's next of kin, and bade them declare before all the people that which the law commanded them to do for Ruth. The man who was her next of kin refused to perform a kinsman's part to the strange woman; so they plucked off his shoe in the city gate, and Boaz bought up the inheritance of Mahlon in Ephrath, including his field and his widow; and, taking Ruth home to his house, she became his wife, a second Rachel, and the mother of a line of kings.

Then, after three generations had passed away, came the episode of Saul. When the people rose up and clamoured for a king to reign over them, Samuel, a Bethlehemite by blood, chose for them Saul, the son of Kish, and anointing him with holy oil, bade him repair to Rachel's sepulchre, where—if his kingship were accepted by the Lord—he would meet two men, who were to tell him that the lost asses were found, and that his father, Kish, was in trouble for his son. Saul went down to the tomb of Rachel, near which he received the first confirmation of his Divine call to reign over Israel.

A little later, in the same succession, came the more beautiful idyl of David.

Jesse (the son of Obed, the son of Ruth) was an old man, a very old man, when David was born to him. David was the last of Jesse's ten sons, of whom Eliab, the eldest born, was already a man of mature age. From these grown brothers, who were tall and comely, with the strength of

giants, like the young men of Bethlehem, the boy, who was small of stature and fair of face, having red hair and light eyes, like many of the youths and girls to be seen in these streets of Bethlehem even now, won little of a brother's love. In the East, a slave, a woman, and a youth, are on a par, and are equally despised. They set the boy to do a bond-man's work ; to tend goats and asses ; to wander, at the tail of a flock of sheep, over yon fields and ridges by the Shepherds' Tower ; but David had the grace to turn the slave's office into use and beauty. Left to his own will, with his sheep to mind and protect, he learned how to sling stones, to run after the wolf and its prey, to wrestle with the leopard and the ounce, to drive back the Arab robber to his lair. He learned, too, on the hill-side, to bear hunger and thirst, to endure heat by day and frost by night. He grew familiar with every cave and glen, with every spring and well, between Mar Elias and Engedi. More than all, for his fame and power, he learned how to make lutes and harps, how to play deftly on stringed instruments, how to set his sorrows and his joys to music. Some of his sweetest Psalms come forth from these hills, and breathe the spirit of the savage wady and of the silent night. Like the wild country in which he dwelt, his verse appears to be peopled by the ox and the ass, the hind and the calf, by the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field. In its tunes may be heard the roar of the lion, the yelp of the pard. It tells of the pit dug as a snare in the Desert, and of the man who had dug it falling into that snare. It sparkles with the glory of night, with the flush of dawn, with the light of the morning star. In the poetry of the Psalms, this tending on sheep, this doing of a slave's duties, is exalted into a type of the Divine rule : "The Lord is my shepherd : I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in pastures of new grass ; he leadeth me beside the waters which are stilled."

When Samuel came up from Gilgal to choose a king in the place of Saul, who had offended God by his disobedience, Jesse and his sons were at a feast ; all except David,

who was out in the fields with his sheep. But the prophet sending for him to the house, the Lord chose him for king of Israel, and the messenger anointed him with the holy oil.

On David being brought, as a cunning harper, into the King's house, that he might play upon the harp and drive away the Evil Spirit, the King's son Jonathan, and the King's daughter Michal, saw him and loved him; but Saul was mad, and in his madness he struck his spear at the minstrel, who, by help of his wife Michal, had to let himself down over the city wall in a creel, and go up thence to the abode of the prophet in Ramah, perhaps yon height of Neby Samuel which we see on the north, above the line of Mar Elias. From that day, until the King died, David was a fugitive in these hills about Bethlehem; now dwelling in the Cave of Adullam, near the Mount of Paradise; now in the passes of Engedi, near the shores of the Dead Sea. The aged Jesse, no longer safe in Judea, went over the Salt Sea into Moab, into the land of his grandmother Ruth. David was hunted like a slave and an outlaw; now dropping down cliffs, now hiding in caves; once cutting off the skirt of his pursuer's robe, another time carrying away the cruse of water and the royal spear. Every stone about Bethlehem seems to whisper of his adventures and escapes.

Even after the fair youth had become King of Israel, his connection with Bethlehem did not cease. The town became known as the City of David. The companions of his watchings and his wanderings were made his captains of the host, his members of the Thirty and the Three. Those who had gathered round him in the Cave of Adullam were his heroes and his mighty men. The fields which had belonged to Boaz the Sheikh remained the fields of David the King; and the house in which Ruth had lived continued in his possession, until he gave it away in his affectionate old age to one whom he loved as dearly as a son.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HOUSE OF CHIMHAM.

THE next idyl of which Bethlehem was the scene, is that of Chimham.

The story of how the home of Ruth and David came to pass from the royal line into a stranger's hands is a part of the sad history of the Psalmist's heart.

At the time when the King fled on foot over the brook Cedron and the Mount of Olives, from the threats of his rebellious son Absalom, he found shelter, he and the crowd flying with him, in Mahanaim, a strong city beyond Jordan, in the territory of Gad. There, three great sheikhs of the Eastern bank—one of them an old man, a stranger to David—brought into Mahanaim mats, and flagons, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse, also honey and butter, and the flesh of sheep, and the cheese of kine, for the King and the King's followers. David was overcome by a kindness which his own children had not shown him. This aged, unknown stranger was Barzillai, the Gileadite: and David never forgot either him or his. When Absalom fell, and the King was returning to his palace on Mount Zion, David spoke to the old sheikh, saying: "Come thou with me to Jerusalem, and dwell with me, and eat at my table." But the Gileadite answered him: "I am this day fourscore years old. Can thy servant taste any more what I eat or drink? Can I hear any more the voices of singing men and singing

women? Wherefore then should I be a burden unto my lord the King? Let thy servant turn back again, that I may die in my own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant, Chimham; let him go over with my lord the King."

And so it came to pass that Chimham, son of Barzillai, crossed over from beyond Jordan with the King, and riding up with him from Gilgal by the Wady Cedron to Mount Zion, dwelt in the palace like one of his sons. For David loved the young sheikh, and gave him food from his table and a house from his patrimony in Bethlehem. On his dying bed, remembering the old Gileadite, he entreated his son Solomon that he would be kind to Chimham, and continue to rank him among those who ate from the same dish with himself. He was to stand among the household, favoured among the few, a brother, a companion of the great King, rather than a stranger and a guest in his palace. The gift which Chimham received from the King's bounty continued for many generations to bear his name.

Five hundred years flow by, and Bethlehem becomes the scene of a new idyl, the story of which centres about the home of Ruth, now come to be called by the natives the House of Chimham—the idyl of Jeremiah, when the last band of Israelites turned their faces against the Lord, refusing to hear his prophet and obey his law.

A host of fugitives, soldiers and husbandmen, nobles and priests, with their flocks and herds, their servants and slaves, came hurrying along the road from Gibeon, chased by a phantom; men, women, and children, either seated on asses and camels, or trampling along the stony paths; flying they knew not whither from the wrath of King Nebuchadnezzar. They marched by the site of Jerusalem, where the temple was then a ruin, and the palaces of Zion were dust. They crossed the ridge of Mar Elias, taking their farewell glance of the sacred hill. But near the tomb of Rachel and the home of Ruth they paused and pitched their tents, that they might take counsel for the last time together, and inquire of

the Lord what they should do, which way they should wend. Among the flying princes was Johanan, among the flying prophets, Jeremiah.

A great crime had been committed in Judah, and the reign of David's house had closed in treachery and blood. In that middle stage from David to JESUS, long after Galilee and Samaria had fallen into the stranger's hands, and the ten tribes of Israel had been dispersed over Syria, Media, and the countries beyond the Tigris, these rocky fortresses of Benjamin and Judah had been also occupied by foreign troops, and the Holy City itself had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar, after a stormy siege. The conquerors, maddened by a long resistance, had levelled its walls, burnt its Temple, and carried its people away captive into Babylon. A remnant only had been left in the land: the poor and the aged, who tilled the soil, and trained the vines, and who were wholly unused to arms. They had been left under the rule of Gedaliah and the ministry of Jeremiah; a remnant of the weak, the simple, and the helpless; not men who would be likely to rise upon their masters, yet strong enough to cultivate the earth, to continue the language, and to preserve the ancient law. These men had gone back to their fields and vineyards, and garnered that year an abundance of corn and wine. After fixing their seat on Mizpeh, a height beyond Zion, and threshing the corn, they had been joined by many bands of their countrymen from Ammon and Moab; among others by Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, a prince of their royal line; a weak and turbulent man, unable to endure the government of Gedaliah, even over a remnant of farmers and shepherds. Ishmael entered into a plot with Baalis king of Ammon, to murder Gedaliah, and deliver the last remnant of Judah captive into his hands. Johanan, one of the few chiefs who had been left behind in Judea, perceiving these designs of Ishmael, reported them to Gedaliah; but the good man, pure in his own heart, could not be induced to suspect the young prince, and to take any steps in his own defence. When Johanan offered

to kill Ishmael and save the people from a fatal crime, Gedaliah, treating him as a slanderer, sent him away. This lack of suspicion had cost him his life. At a repast, as they were breaking bread together, Ishmael rose upon Gedaliah, and putting him to the sword, seized the town, and the hareem, with the eunuchs and the king's daughters, the priests, the two prophets, Baruch and Jeremiah, together with all the people who had been left alive in Mizpeh, and would have carried them away captive into Ammon, into the court of Baalis, had not the watchful Johanan, hearing of the murder and capture, called in his bands and followed in pursuit. Overtaken by Johanan and deserted by his partizans, the wicked prince had fled into Ammon, leaving his captives, with the priests and the king's daughters, in Johanan's hands.

But Johanan had pursued these murderers, not from fear of God so much as from dread of the great king ; and still fearing lest the rage of Nebuchadnezzar should be kindled anew against them on account of Ishmael's crime, he and his captains quitted Gibeon, where they had recovered the spoils of Mizpeh from the ravishers, and marching south, on their way towards Egypt, paused for a few days round the house of Chimham, this Bethlehem khan.

Johanan and his captains came into the khan to Jeremiah, calling upon him to pray for them to the Lord, that the God of their fathers would deign to guide them in the way, saying that whether they thought his counsels good or evil they would obey the Lord's commands. Then Jeremiah prayed for them during ten days, until the Voice came upon him, and then going out among the tents, he, in God's name, forbade the people to depart into Egypt ; saying—"Be not afraid of the King of Babylon, for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you out of his hands."

Not with joy and rapture, as in the olden days, but with doubt and anger, the band of fugitives received this message from the Lord. They had given their pledge, but they would not redeem it. Much of the old faith of Israel had

gone out from among them ; they had learned to fear the king of Babylon more than the King of Heaven ; and they had rebelled in their hearts before they had as yet renounced Jehovah by outward signs. Accusing the great prophet of deceit, of a design to yield them prisoners to Nebuchadnezzar, they rejected his message, and breaking up their camp at Bethlehem before the house of Chimham, they marched away through the plains into Egypt, carrying with them the curse of disobedience, and a threat that they should return to Judah no more, but should die in the strange land, perishing by famine, by pestilence, and by the sword. And so it came to pass ; for neither Johanan nor his captains, neither Baruch nor Jeremiah, neither the eunuchs nor the king's daughters, saw these hills of Jerusalem any more.

Johanan and the captains being gone, the veil fell down over Bethlehem until the time for the last and greatest idyl—that glorious night when the shepherds of yon plain, in which Ruth had gleaned and David sung, were roused by angelic voices singing hymns of joy at the Saviour's birth.

St. Luke, who was St. Peter's friend and companion, and who is thought to have heard the story which he tells of his Master's birth from the lips of Mary in her old age, describes the scene as we may figure it even now. Joseph and his young wife, said to be fair and beautiful, like her ancestor David, and like the young girls of Bethlehem in the streets around us, were coming up from Nazareth in Galilee, to be taxed—that is, to be counted and inscribed—in their own tribe and in their own house. The girl fell sick. The khan was full of people ; there was no room in the guest-chamber ; but the throes of nature came upon her ; and in the narrow cave, where the asses were stalled, the Saviour of mankind was born. In these fields below the inn, the shepherds were abroad, keeping watch over their flocks under the stars of heaven. The winter was in its depth, and the starry hosts were frosted into fire. But a figure gleamed upon these shepherds, which outshone the lights

of heaven. It was the angel of the Lord, who spoke to them, saying, "Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy; for unto you is born this day, in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

And when the shepherds looked up they saw around the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men!"

CHAPTER XIV.

SYRIAN KHANS.

A SYRIAN inn, khan, caravanserai, is not, and never was, an "inn," as we use this word in London, Sydney, and New York ; a house in which you find good food and a clean bed, an obliging hostess, a cheery welcome, and a heavy bill. Such things are not of the East.

A Syrian khan is a fort and a mart ; a refuge from thieves ; a shelter from the heat and dust ; a place where a man and his beast may lodge, where a trader may sell his wares, and a pilgrim may slake his thirst. In the most ancient days, before Abraham had yet led his sheep out of Hauran and pitched his tents in the plain of Moreh, the khan was either a sheikh's house or tent, the best place in the town, the safest corner of the camp ; for a chief having everywhere a right to plunder and protect the strangers who come among his tribe, no other house than his could receive a guest. Where in that old time there was neither sheikh's house nor tent in which to receive wayfarers, as might often be the case in desert roads and in lonely glens, there was still some rude sort of khan, caravanserai, or inn, though it might be little more than a field or a small enclosure, set apart by the tribe as a camping-ground for such merchants and strangers as might chance to travel through their land. The word khan (from the Persian) means a lodging for the night. When this lodging for the night could not be given in either a sheikh's house or tent,

on account of distance, a khan would be erected by Arab piety (as in Alpine passes we Franks erect houses of refuge from snow and mist), nearly always near a spring or stream, and in the shade of a goodly tree or a group of trees ; to wit, by the fountain of Elisha near Jericho, and under the Patriarch's oak at Hebron.

As the sons of Ishmael grew strong, and the merchandise passing through their land became rich, these open fields, in which the merchant lay down under a tree, had to be either fenced with a ridge of prickly thorn, or covered from attack by a wall of stones. Such would appear to have been that khan by the wayside from Egypt into Canaan at which the brethren of Joseph slept that night when they found the money in their sacks and were sore afraid ; such that other wayside khan at which Zipporah, the wife of Moses, moved by the Lord's anger, took up the sharp stone, and with her own hand circumcised her first-born son. This rude sort of lodging for the night may be seen at this day in many parts of Syria : as at Bab el Wady near Latrûn, at Riha in the plains of the Dead Sea, and at Kirjath Jearim, now Abu Gosh. In each of these places the inn is at most a rough shed, perhaps only a small field, having a tree for shade, a heap of flints for protection, and a spring near by for drink. That of Kirjath Jearim is of the oldest type. The wall is of rough stones, piled up without art ; there is no gate or door by which to enter ; no roof or awning stands overhead ; no shade is provided beyond the lacing leaves. A traveller, eager for his dinner of bread and grapes, for a draught of cold water, for an hour of rest, has to leap the fence. But being once within the square of stones, he is safe from the smiting of a fiery sun, from the trampling feet of camels, in some degree from the pilfering children of Abu Gosh.

From this rough refuge in the fields to such a khan as that of Bethlehem in the days of Jeremiah, and to such caravanserais as those which Haroun and Saladin built on the Syrian roads, the ascent was easy. Raise the rough

wall ; build it of blocks ; cut a gate through the front ; carry a duct into the centre ; raise a trough and lay a pipe ; set the fountain fizzing and flowing ; throw a line of archways or lewans round the inner face of the wall ; set a man to watch the gate ; and you have provided all the conditions of a good Oriental khan. Such would seem to have been that edifice on Mount Ephraim in which Micah received the Danite spies. Such also was that home of Chimham in which Jeremiah prayed to the Lord, and to which Joseph brought his young wife from Nazareth to lodge.

An Oriental khan is usually built by a prince or sheikh ; and from its great size must always be erected by a man of wealth. Among Moslem rulers, Haroun and Saladin are remembered and blessed as the greatest builders of khans, for in the piety of Eastern life the raising of a khan is considered a sacred deed, like the planting of a grove and digging of a well. In our own time, a khan like that of Cairo, like that of Beyrout, is more of a market than an inn, and in such cities it may be raised for the sake of lucre ; but the fine old structures which adorned the great roads of commerce and travel between Jerusalem and Alexandria, between Damascus and Ptolemais, between Gadara and Sidon, were monuments of piety and pity, built by their founders without thought of gain, and were almost as sacred in character, as durable in material, as either a synagogue or a mosque. Even when the wars of race or religion swept away towns and villages from these roads, the khans were allowed by common consent to remain ; being considered as a sort of holy property, like the springs and the wells, in which all mankind had an equal and a common right. The Babylonians spared the house of Chimham ; the Greeks spared the khan of Joseph's Well ; the Crusaders spared Khan Lebonah. What a hospital is in a modern war, a khan was in an ancient war : a secular building sanctified by its noble use. It was always an edifice set apart, even when it stood in the midst of a great city, having its own walls and gates, and its own set of rules. It was never

built in a slight and temporary style of art; but when raised of stone, by one who felt pride in his work, it had the enduring character of an Eastern mekhemeh or a Western town-hall. A great sheikh having the right of hospitality and protection, the strength and beauty of his khan would always prove the best advertisements of his power.

In the better class of Syrian towns and hamlets, and even in desert wastes when these lie in the routes of commerce, the khan is a large, solid, and durable edifice: some ruins of a khan near the road from Gilgal to Jerusalem, on a hot ridge that has no longer an ancient name to tell its story, cover as large a space as the foundations of a church. When built by a great sheikh like Barzillai, or a rich Sultan like Saladin, a khan would have a high wall, an inner court, a range of arches, an open gallery round the four sides, as in one of Chaucer's inns, and in many cases a tower from which the watcher might descry the approach of marauding bands. On one side of the square, but outside the wall, there is often a huddle of sheds, set apart from the main edifice as stables for the asses and camels, the buffaloes and goats. In the centre of the khan springs a fountain of water, the first necessity of an Arab's life; and around the jets and troughs in which the limpid element streams, lies the gay and picturesque litter of the East. Camels wait to be unloaded, dogs quarrel for a bone. Bedaween from the desert, their red zannars choked with pistols, are at prayer. In the archways squat the merchants with their bales of goods; goods dazzling to the eye and dangerous to the purse; amber from the Baltic Sea, gold-work from Cairo, shawls from the Indian looms, spices from Arabia Felix, precious ointments wrung from the gardens of Moab. Half-naked men are cleansing their hands ere sitting down to eat. Here a barber is at work upon a shaven crown, there a fellah lies asleep in the shade. Many people pass in and out; the faint coming in to drink, the weary to repose, the thrifty to buy and sell; but there

is no hostess to cry Good-day, and no cook to prepare the noontide meal. Each man has to carry his dinner and his bed ; to litter his horse or camel ; to dress his food, to draw his water, to light his fire, and to boil his mess of herbs. The archway in which he lays up his goods and spreads out his carpet being bare, he must bring with him his cruse and his pan, his jar and his dish, together with his bag of rice, his tinder-box, his taper, his coffee-cup, his brazier, and his cooking range. When he finds the khan crowded with pilgrims and travellers—as during the religious festivals, and at gatherings of the tribe for either peace or war—he may have to spread his quilt on the straw, happy in his simplicity and fatigue to enjoy the lodgings of his camel and his ass.

It is only in recent times, since the opening of Greek and Latin convents throughout the Holy Land, that the native khans have declined in importance and in number. The monks from Italy and Spain, from Greece and Anatolia, though they may appear neither clean nor comely to an English eye, can offer you a bed for the night and a shelter from the Bedaween lance. Lodging with them, your cell may be dirty, your food will be coarse ; but their roof is high, their court-yard is cool, and their gate is barred. At least you can lie down in peace ; your shoes shaken off from your feet ; your zannar unwound ; your arms of defence slung up to the convent wall. Your beast, too, can be housed and fed. It seems but little ; though to a weary traveller, who has worn off the strangeness and romance of life in a tent, it is a good deal to be able to lay down his revolver, and fall into sleep without a fear of being roused in the dead of night by either a jackal's howl or a Bedaween's grip.

When the caravanserais were left to the trader and the Arab only, they fell away ; some of them crumbling into dust ; yet many of them have outlived the churches, synagogues, and mosques. Sometimes the wall of a khan is the only monument of man's art to be found in a morning ride.

A ruin, or even a memory, of one of these old resting-places for the night, serves to keep alive among the desert tribes some knowledge of the most ancient and famous sites ; such as the inn of the Bridge of Jacob's Daughters on the Jordan, and the inn of Joseph's Well on the road to Cæsarea Philippi.

CHAPTER XV.

THE INN OF BETHLEHEM.

A QUESTION may now be put :

Was this Inn of Bethlehem, near to which Christ was born in a cave, the same khan of Bethlehem around which the bands of Johanan ranged while Jeremiah prayed to the Lord for ten whole days?

Men who have lived in a tent, and journeyed along Syrian roads, noting the position of old khans, with the strength of their walls, and the extent of their accommodation for man and beast, will ask no proof for the assumption that there never could have been more than one public khan in a place like Bethlehem; always a small town, one of the least among the thousands of Judah; any more than they would require evidence that there had been more than one mekhemeh, more than one sheikh's house. These inns were built in stages, always at a distance one from another; about seven miles apart, like our old market-towns; an easy day's march on foot. Bethlehem, being the first stage on the great southern road, had an inn. About the same distance from Jerusalem on the eastern road, at the present fountain El Haud, lie the ruins of an inn. Midway from Jerusalem to Jericho—six or seven miles beyond El Haud—there was a second inn, a hospice on a wild ridge of hill, a half-way house, at which JESUS must often have stopped to rest, and which he made the scene of his noblest parable. This was the usual rule in Syria. Khan Tumân was about

eight miles distance from Aleppo ; Khan el Mudeirej the same distance from Damascus. Khan Minyeh lay seven miles from Tiberias, on the Damascus road ; Khan et Tujjar stood some furlongs farther on the Acre road. No case occurs, either in Hebrew or Moslem days, of two caravanserais being open in the same village. Nor is it likely that where a Syrian inn had once existed it would ever have ceased to stand, until it became a ruin, a recollection, and a name. For not only was the khan a public edifice, with a strong frame, and much beauty of detail, but the very ground on which it stood, from being set apart for hospitable uses, would become in a certain sense holy—a site which was not to be disturbed for any common purpose. A church, a mosque, might be built on such ground without offending the public eye, as we see from the basilica at Bethlehem and the white mosque at Ramleh ; but the ruins of a khan, long consecrated to hospitality—in the East a religious duty, almost a religious rite—would hardly ever be removed to make room for a meaner pile.

Thus, it appears safe to conclude that the inn of Joseph and Mary was the inn of Jeremiah ; and if it were the inn of Jeremiah, it was also beyond doubt the house of Chimham ; and consequently it was presumably the house which had once been that of David and of Ruth.

Every hint afforded by the Bible narrative, as to local fact and local colour, helps to prove that the birthplace of David was the birthplace of JESUS, and that the khan, or residence of Jesse, in which these two men were born, stood here in Bethlehem, on the very ridge now crowned by the basilica of St. Helena, the church of the Holy Nativity.

Boaz, we are told, was the sheikh of this town ; the chief man, who had the right and duty of receiving strangers into his house. As such he would dwell, like the Arab lords on the Nile in our own day, beyond the town, at its entrance, on what may be called the guest-coming side. This side is seen in the old khan near Ramleh, where the pile stands out on the road towards Cairo ; and in the still older khan

near Bethany, where it is pushed out beyond the village towards Jericho and the Jordan. Jerusalem being taken as the bourne of all travel, the guest-house, in other words the sheikh's house, would be so arranged as to open on the country; thus, the first gate to which a wayfarer came, near a village, would be that of his host and protector for the night. Now, at Bethlehem, as the shape of the ridge and its relation to Jerusalem imply, the spot on which the house of hospitality would stand must have been a little below the town, at the junction of roads coming up the great valleys from Tekoa, Jericho, Herodion, and Engedi; on a spot lying below the gates and above the fields; in fact, the very ground upon which the inn of JESUS stood, and on which the church and convent of the Grotto stand.

Here, then, where by all analogies we should seek it, the Bible tells us that the house of Boaz stood on the green slope, some paces below the town, between the gates and the corn-fields. Ruth, living in the town with Naomi, had to go down into these fields, as the gleaners go down even now; "Wash thyself, therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor;" the descent from the hill on which the city is built to the fields being sharp. Boaz, after his night adventure with Ruth among the sheaves of corn, is said to have gone up from his house to the city gate: "Then Boaz went up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by." The sheikh's house was, therefore, below the town, and above the fields, on the slope of the hill. If the prior went up from his convent into the town to-day, his walk would be described in the very same words.

The house of Chimham, after Chimham had been made sheikh of Bethlehem and owner of the guest-house, answers like truth to the accounts which we read in the Book of Ruth. It is described as not in the town, but near to it. Jeremiah and the fugitives from Gibeon "dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem." By it, near it; not in it.

Is it not reasonably clear, then, that the inn in which JESUS was born was the patrimony of Boaz, the home of David ?

That the spot once occupied by this khan is that now clothed with the basilica of the Holy Nativity is not less clear.

Justin Martyr and the Church traditions tell us that the Lord was born in a cave, which Justin says was not in the village but close to it. Caves abound in the wadies round about Bethlehem. It was in such a cave as the sacred grotto that David hid himself from the ire of Saul, and in another such cave that he cut away the skirt of the royal robe. These openings into the limestone rock are put to all kinds of service ; at Siloam they are used for tombs ; at Urtâs for houses ; at Mar Saba for cells ; more frequently they are used as shelter for the sheep and goats. In an hour's ride from the Church of the Nativity you may count a dozen such caves, in some of which people live, as in those of Urtâs, and in many of which it will be strange if you do not find an Arab and his flock.

Justin was born in Syria, and having travelled into Egypt, was familiar with the scenery and usages of Oriental life, both in the high country and in the flat. That a cave should be found at a khan ; that this cave should be used as a stable ; that when the khan was full of people the wayfarer might have to lodge for the night among the litter ; would be to Justin Martyr facts as familiar as the sound of his own voice. Such a necessity as that of having to lie down in the same shed with the asses and camels must have occurred to him often, as it may occur even now to any man who roams about the East.

Evidence to the same effect is found in the church itself ; the pile erected by St. Helena on the spot which Syrian tradition had then pointed out to her as the sacred spot. On such a point as the position of an ancient khan on a great public road, public knowledge could hardly have gone astray. A Syrian khan, with the permanency of a mekhemeh

or a mosque, has a fame much wider than a mekhemeh or a mosque. Justin knew the place, and no man acquainted with Palestine will easily believe that between the days of Justin and Helena the knowledge of a site so famous as the Khan of Bethlehem could have been lost. The death of Justin was separated from the birth of Helena by less than a hundred years. Is it likely that in so short a period the scene of Jeremiah's struggle with Johanan could be forgotten by the Jews—the scene of Christ's nativity by the Christians? Names last long in Palestine. We know from Holy Writ that the house of Chimham was called by his name five centuries after he had passed away.

Again, apart from its strange and memorable story, the Khan of Bethlehem was the most notable of all the caravan-serais in Judah ; being the first stage on the journey into Egypt, the first night's rest after leaving Zion ; the place where the camp had to be formed for the march, where the stragglers had to be called in, where the last kisses and adieus were given. It was the rallying point and starting point for all pilgrims and merchants going South. Such inns are not forgotten in a hundred years. Why, even in busy England, in changeful France, the memory of such a site would be kept alive for a longer time than divided Justin from Helena. Have we yet lost sight of the Three Pigeons at Brentford, of the inn at Ware, of the Tabard in the Old Kent Road ?

The basilica being built, the spot would be fixed for ever. No man has even doubted that the church of Helena is the same in site and substance with that now standing over the sacred cave. This venerable pile, the most ancient in the Christian world, is a silent witness that the Lord was born in a grotto of the rock ; that this grotto in the rock was near a khan, and part of the khan. The cave is still here ; a natural opening in the rock ; a grotto hollowed out of the soft limestone, like a hundred others to be found within a dozen miles of the church. Take away this roof of English oak, remove this front of Syrian marble, and the

grotto would have all the appearance of a common cave ; its mouth opening towards the Shepherds' Tower and the fields of Ruth. As the shepherds came up the hill-side, they would be able to see the lamp burning in the entrance of the cave.

The tale told in the Gospel narrative is at one with itself and with the site : " She brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

CHAPTER XVI.

CARMEL.

"IT is always cool on Mount Carmel," says a Syrian hajjee, toiling in the afternoon heat along the Plain of Esdraelon towards the sea. "Cool as Mount Carmel," is a proverb in Galilee; one which we shall soon be in a position to test, the convent on its brow being full in sight. Plodding through the lines of a Turkish camp, threading the brisk little streets of Haifa, bobbing under a forest of olive trees, ambling over a plain which divides the mountain from the sea, we reach the foot of a steep stair, cut in the rock, more than a mile in height. A course of trotting round the dome of St. Paul's, of racing up the steps of the Ara Coeli, would be no bad training for this ascent to our Lady of Carmel's nest in the clouds. A rude cross stuck into the stony soil, points out to the pilgrim where it is proper for him to rest his feet and count his beads. Here and there a roadside chapel tells him when he should make a longer pause and recite a holy text. All the way up these ramps and ledges the ground is broken, and patches of the protecting wall have slid into the abyss. It is not a safe road to ride down after dinner in the dark.

A smart tap of the whip, a free dig of the spur, bring us merry and warm to the convent gate, where we are noisily welcomed by a couple of friars and a score of dogs. Unlike the more gentle and chivalrous Alpine breed, these dogs of Carmel are taught to yelp and fight, to guard sheep and

goats, to attack men, especially bronze men dressed in loose sacks and shawls. Bold as lions and fierce as wolves, these dogs appear to belong to that wild race of Esdraelon which tore Jezebel into shreds. They are tame only to the monks who train and feed them.

Lashing these curs aside, one of the friars conducts us into a refectory, where we eat with thankfulness a dinner of herbs and fowls, washed down our throats with a glass of sweet syrup and a little red Cyprus wine.

Dinner being done, grace duly said, we go with Father Cyrillo, a thin, dry Spaniard of La Mancha, who has lived and grown yellow in the East, to the convent roof, where we taste the salt sea breeze, and find that it is passing cool. The sun is sinking in the waves ; Haifa and Acre, with their white minarets and walls, and the bold loop of bay on which they stand, are all steeped in the purple shadows of the sea. From the chapel hard by, where the servants of our Lady are at vespers, floats the perfume flung about the altar, and the swell and cadence of the evening song. High up in this holy mountain, heaven and earth seem to kiss each other into peace.

But they only seem. The strong gates, the stern watch, the fierce dogs, suggest to a stranger other and less tranquil thoughts.

The convent of Elijah stands on a spur of the Carmel range, on the last wild bluff beetling above the sea. Beyond its outer fence of wall, and starting from the ridge on which the convent stands, rolls high and inland a sea of mountain crests. Near to the chapel, a field is fenced and cultivated by the monks ; below the wall lies a bit of garden ; in the outer court grow a few olive trees, bending with fruit, though they are said to be older than the flood. A monk, who is also a cook, is providing a repast by shaking ripe berries from one of these aged trees. In the convent yard stands a flock of goats, black fellows, with grizzly beards, brought in for the night, lest any stragglers from the Hanadi and Beni Sakkr camps should be prowling in the woods. Here they

are safe, though Akeel Aga may be lord of yon hill and vale. Sitting on the house-top, behind walls and gates, and having the protection of a hundred dogs, one hears of these Bedaween braves with an even pulse ; yet with spirits in a mood to make the growl of these watchers come not unwelcome to our aërie, even through the swell and cadence of an evening psalm. The hush of nature is so profound on this lonely height, that a bay from a dog disturbs the scene rather pleasantly, like the chirp of birds in a wood, and the roll of surf on a shore.

The Arab may be kept from the convent interior by gates and bars ; but the whole force of Cabouli cannot keep him from infesting and ravaging the open plain. Now, as in the days of Gideon, the nomad is a robber and the black tent a curse.

Cabouli, Pasha of Saida, whose camp in the Valley of Nazareth we have just left, is one of the great princes of Turkey ; a poet, a scholar, a soldier ; one of those new statesmen of Islam who play whist and read papers, and aim at being good Moslems in faith and practice, while they are perfect Franks in culture and in speech. Cabouli's French is copious ; his familiarity with men and affairs in Europe large. He has lived in England, and knows the delight of a country house, including bright women, good dinners, and truthful speech. Put aside Layard, Rawlinson, and Strangford, men who have spent much of their lives in the East, who in England can be said to know more about Syria, Persia, and Arabia, than Cabouli knows about England, Germany, and France ?

It may be added, in favour of men who, being parted from ourselves by barriers of race, of idiom, and of creed, are never likely to have more than justice done to them by Franks, that the habit of searching into our policy and manners is not confined to three or four men of rank and genius in the Ottoman Empire. Has any man ever met a Pasha of Belgrade in the living flesh ? Having seen a bright and shrewd intelligence, a wary outlook into Western arts, in

many an officer of inferior grade, I have come to fancy that the imaginary and amusing pasha must have vanished from the earth, like the Memlook and the Janizary, never to come back. In nearly every pasha, every bey, whom I have met in Turkey, Syria, Egypt, and the Islands, I have found a man of gentle manners, of fair information, of un-failing courtesy. Nearly all these men have spoken either French or English; some have added Russian and German; few were ignorant of Greek. Yet none of these languages were native to their lips. They all knew Turkish, and most of them read Arabic and Persian, the languages of the Koran and Ferdousi. Do the best men in our service beat them much? A Turk has not ceased to be plump, and languid, and poetical, to smoke over-much, to love colour and pomp, to hold his head high in the world; but he has pretty well ceased to buy slaves and eunuchs, to pride himself on his ignorance, to condemn the rest of mankind as infidels and dogs. Cabouli Pasha is a Turk of this better school.

In Galilee he has a labour before him to test his virtue and to develop his power.

Unlike most of the Sinaitic and Nilotic Arabs—who keep to one district, jealously guarding their wells and pastures against intruding flocks—the tribes which people the great Syrian Desert, stretching from the Euphrates to the Jordan—the Anezi, the Mowali, the Shammar, the Beni Sakkr, the Salhaan—make a kind of circuit of the seasons, following the grass and herbs as they grow and wither, moving with their tents and hareems, their slaves and camels, and driving before them their goats and kine, in search of markets for cheese and flesh, and of pasturage free of cost. When they have stripped the valley of its herbage and drained the well of its water, they rove into another and another valley, eating up the grass on No-man's-land, and when that fails them, breaking into the fenced pieces and the open plains. They come like locusts, and so depart. Orchard, garden, meadow, pasture, vineyard, every green patch of ground is

the same to these hungry herds. In two or three days a peasant's whole substance is devoured ; his house sacked, his field mown, his well emptied, his cattle stolen, his garner swept. Every year the harvests of Sharon, Shefelah, and Esdraelon, tempt these marauders from beyond Jordan, just as the harvests of Kent and Mercia used to bait the Saxon vikings and the Danish jarls. Every year sees the peasant fly from the face of his destroyer, leaving his garden unplanted, his field untilled, his tank uncleaned. The soil falls out of cultivation ; thorns sprout among the orange trees and apple trees ; dôm, cactus, and prickly pear, take the places of dates and figs. The luxurious plain becomes a desert.

But when the peasant is gone, and his hut has become a heap, his garden a brake, his well a puddle, the Arabs, finding no prey in that quarter, cease to go near it. Then the husbandman is tempted to return, to replant his orchard, to rebuild his house, until the green crops, the fruit trees, and the fresh water in the wells shall again bring the Bedaween upon his labours, and the peasant, after struggling for a season to buy their good-will, relinquishes the spoil. From more than half the rich Plain of Esdraelon, the garden of Syria, the peasants have been driven by these Bedaween raids.

No government, not even that of Rome in imperial days, has ever been able to stop these inroads and prevent these depredations. Gideon checked them for a moment, and Ibrahim checked them for another moment ; but, just as the Beni Kadem returned to Esdraelon after Gideon, the Beni Sakkr returned after Ibrahim. How to drive back these nomadic races, confining them to the mountains and plains beyond Jordan, is a problem which has always occupied and always baffled the wit of civilized men.

From this convent-roof, you range over a mass of sea and sand, of wood and plain, of hill and city ; over the landscape which spread its beauties before Elijah when he saw the cloud rise up from the sea ; over that on which the Redeemer

gazed when He crossed the ridge of Carmel, coming out of Samaria into Galilee after his conversation with the woman at Jacob's Well. At your feet fret the blue waves ; here is the Arab town of Haifa ; there, beyond the bay, lies Acre with its white walls, minarets, and towers ; above that city, to the north, stands the bold headland of Capo Blanco, a Syrian imitation of Dover cliff. Beyond that feature of the coast, unseen of the eye, never absent from the thought, lie buried in the sea and the sands, the palaces of Tyre and the ruins of Sarepta ; that Tyre which Joshua described as the strong city, that Sarepta in which Elijah restored the widow's son ; and on the site of Sidon itself, the mother of Carthage and Cadiz, a city older than Jerusalem, a rival of Damascus, stands the Arab village of Saida, a heap of walls and gardens, a few yellow houses and a mosque. From the coast above Sidon swell the heights of Lebanon, shoulder on shoulder, high above the line of unmelting snow. Those are the Cedar Mountains, peopled by the Maronite and Druse. Higher than the rest of those heights, soars Hermon ; holy, beautiful Hermon, with its bold front, its snowy peak, and its shining cloud ; the Alp of Israel ; visible from her high places, her boundary on the north, everywhere glittering in her sight like a star. From the dip at its feet gush the waters of Jordan.

Between these four natural frontiers—Hermon on the north, Jordan on the east, Carmel on the south, the great sea on the west—lies that province of Galilee in which the Saviour lived from infancy to manhood.

Below us, in front of Haifa, glow the fires of a Moslem camp, and a few miles up the wady of Nazareth, is Cabouli, busy with that question of questions which has outlived the sword of Gideon and the genius of Ibrahim. He is trying to hold in check the Bedaween tribes, now moved into sedition by the arts of Akeel Aga.

Fire, theft, and murder, are reported day by day from every part of Galilee. Nazareth is held in a sort of siege. By Cabouli's order, a Frank is not suffered to move inland

from the sea-coast unless he be attended by a guard of ten Bashi Bazouks ; a dashing, frothy addition to your troop ; whom in any case you will have to feed, and in the event of danger to defend. To a painter, to a story-teller, these fellows are worthy of their salt ; they will sit for their portraits, sing round the watch-fires, prose about robbery and war, hunt jackals and shoot eagles, in short, do anything you require of them save fight. Like all true Arabs, they shrink and shudder at the sight of blood ; and most of them having been thieves from their youth upwards, they pity and condemn the folly which impels a Frank to defend his saddle-bags at the risk of his life. This troop of horse must ride in your front, not because Cabouli believes in a dozen Bashi Bazouks repelling a charge of Anezi spears ; he knows that on hearing the first crack of a pistol, they will wheel and fly with a shout. He sends them in some part for show, and in some part for use. Seeing that you are a Frank, he knows that if you fall into a snare, you will be likely to fight, and that when your blood is up, there is a chance of your being either speared or shot ; in which case the murderers will have to be discovered and fines levied on their tribe ; and he can trust these fellows to bring him news of the fray, the name of the offender, and the amount of your loss.

CHAPTER XVII.

AKEEL AGA.

WHO is Akeel Aga ?

The pashas call him an Arab ; in one sense he is so ; but the Bedaween call him a Memlook. He is certainly from the Nile, and is probably of foreign blood.

When Ibrahim undertook to keep the peace in Galilee, he planted a strong colony of Arabs from Cairo at the head of those passes above Cana and Nazareth by which the Anezi and Beni Sakkr swarm over from the Lake Country into the great plains of Esdraelon and Shefelah. These colonists from the desert round the pyramids, loyal and brave, well armed, well mounted, and seventeen hundred strong, proved able and more than able to protect their new lands ; and the Syrian Arabs, learning to fear their lances, gave them the name of Hanadi, from an idea that they had come from India ; that is to say, not from India Proper, but from the hot regions beyond the Arabian Gulf. Akeel was a young sheikh in this Egyptian tribe.

The youth had in him something of that genius for intrigue and war which made his old master, Mohammed Ali, a ruling prince. Clever, daring, and unprincipled, he seems to have first served, then abandoned, his Egyptian chief ; for, while Ibrahim kept his hold on Syria, Akeel was his most faithful slave ; but when Napier shelled the Egyptians out of Acre, Akeel sold his sword to the returning Turk. In a country which knew either law or peace, either unity or strength, a man like Akeel could have done

no great harm to his new sovereign. But Syria is not a country of law and peace. In the province which his tribe had been set to watch, there exists no right, no charter, no ascendancy, save that of the strong arm and the scheming brain. In Galilee, as in every part of Palestine, there may be tents and towns, convents and mosques, but no race, no people, and no law. Every man fears his neighbour as of old, and in the province of Galilee there are perhaps as many gods as in the times of Herod the Great. From the hill of Nazareth, in gazing over a noble landscape, you may count the habitations of Christian, Jew, and Moslem, each sect as intolerant of the other as in the Apostolic times an Arab was of a Greek, or a Samaritan of a Jew. In the north dwell the Maronite and the Druse, and, hated by both, that sect of the Ansayreh whose obscene rites no Frank has yet been suffered to see and live. Everywhere you find division, everywhere strife. Men who herd goats detest their brethren who till the ground, as if the quarrel of Cain and Abel had become an inheritance of the tent and field. Every one's hand is raised against his fellow. The charities and affinities which in Europe soften men's hearts are here unknown. Love of country and pride of race, are phrases which convey no meaning to a Syrian ear. In Syria there are now no Syrians; nothing but hostile races and rival sects. The very name of Syria is unknown to the natives—being the delusion of a Greek sailor, from whom it descended to the makers of books and maps.

In such a community, power lies in the strong man, not in the just law. A sheikh is lord of his tribe, an abbot of his convent, a rabbi of his synagogue. Let the reigning man be called emperor, caliph, king, the true rulers of the land will always be those who are on the spot, the nearest rabbi, priest, and sheikh. In his own tent, a sheikh is both king and judge. When he is daring, like Akeel and Abu Gosh, he may enlarge his sphere. A man of genius may snatch at a crown. Mohammed Ali exchanged a shop in Cavalla for a palace in Cairo.

Posted on the hills beyond Nazareth, in the ways by which the Anezi swarm into these hills and pastures, Akeel very soon made himself a name of fear. No power in Palestine can wholly prevent these Bedaween raids. The Anezi are hungry and brave, their horses fleet and strong; they travel in the dark, and carry off the maize by stealth. Like Gideon, a man may be threshing his corn by night, and he shall not escape from their hands. Yet much can be done against them by a resolute man who knows their nature and is not afraid to act against them. When they move in large bands, they can be watched, overtaken, and dispersed; when they move in small bands, they may be captured or slain. Now, in this good work of smiting the Anezi back into their deserts, Akeel won his earliest notice from the Turks. Under his bright eye and trenchant rule, the Arabs were pressed back on the Jordan; the valleys became a trifle more secure; the fields of Esdraelon were sown with corn. It never could be said that Galilee was quieted, for the scheming brain of the Egyptian sheikh soon told him that his own importance in the country hung on his power to suppress disorder, and that there could be no room for the exercise of skill, no occasion for his master to grant rewards, unless he contrived that there should always be a good deal of riot to chastise. To keep the Anezi in spirits, he sometimes allowed them to escape with a little booty; yet after a few years of his reign the hill country had so far improved in order, safety, and prosperity, that the villagers of many places, beyond his own district, claimed his protecting wing, and a very large tract of Galilee fell under his sway.

A man of glib tongue, of serpentine manner, Akeel began to court the Christians, to make himself useful to strangers, and above all to ingratiate himself with the English and French. Finding him useful, the Porte increased his powers and enlarged his district. Even in London and Paris his name was mentioned, and princes and emperors vied with each other in doing honour to the

subtle Egyptian sheikh. The Prince of Wales, whom he escorted through his territories, gave him a fine revolver. Napoleon sent him the ribbon of the Legion of Honour. Abdul Medjid raised him to the rank of Aga, and signed his commission of colonel in the force which he then commanded, and which was taken into imperial pay. Such favours might have turned an older head. It is alleged against him in Stamboul, that from the date of his receiving that red ribbon from Paris, he fell into intrigue, and became a tool of the French.

The schemes which some of the Turks attribute to Akeel, are not so much the proofs of his genius as evidence of the fear in which he is held. Having by his measures in Galilee come into conflict with numbers of the Fedan, Weled Ali, and Beni Sakkr, branches of the great Anezi nation, he artfully converted these enemies into friends and allies; persuading them of his great authority with the Sultan, whose officer he was; and permitting them to make an occasional foray into districts which had either neglected to make him presents, or had otherwise incurred his wrath. Then, it is said, he took to himself a wife from the family of a great Syrian sheikh. These steps are supposed to have been only the opening moves of his game. It is supposed in Stamboul that he sought every opportunity of showing the chiefs of the Anezi and Shammar that the land is their own, that the Turks keep them out of their right, and that they may win it from these conquerors again: first, by healing up their feuds; secondly, by uniting their friendly spears; thirdly, by a succession of rapid and harassing attacks on their common foe. Some fancy that the end which he may have in view is to form a confederacy of Arab tribes under the protectorate of France. The dread of such a union may be vague and slight; for the feuds of the Shammar and Anezi are born in the blood and bone; yet the project has been so far annoying to the government of Abdul Aziz, as to provoke Fuad Pasha into ordering measures of defence.

On being called by the Seraskier to Damascus, Akeel, false himself, and fearful of falling into a snare, excused himself from obeying his superior officer, on account of the troubles in his country, then slowly recovering from the relief occasioned by the departing Zouaves from Beyrout. Two or three robberies on the road, by agents of his own, caused an alarm at Haifa, and seemed to satisfy the Frank consul that Akeel's presence was required near home. A French boat took the news of these disorders to Stamboul; M. de Moustier telegraphed it to Paris; evidence, as he said, that the country was already disturbed, and that all honest men desired the Zouaves to be sent back. But Fuad, the grand vizier and seraskier, having views of his own in Syria, which an army of Franks would not be likely to promote, ordered Akeel to be checked and reduced; when Cabouli recalled his commission, put a new colonel in his place, and brought his services in Galilee to an end.

Then came the usual stages of a conflict in the Syrian hills. A band of marauders overran Galilee. Some of the Hanadi troops threw down their arms; and those who remained true to their caliph would not lift a carbine against their sheikh. The Beni Sakkr and the Weled Ali spread themselves joyously though the plains. Every night a village was on fire; every day an outrage was committed on the roads. Caravans going inland from Acre were obliged to stop; invalids trying to reach the baths of Tiberias were driven back. The consuls declined to give any more passes and protections. From Beyrout to Damascus, from Damascus to Hebron, the whole country felt the shock of this man's revolt; and the consuls of countries which have no love for Turkey, and no desire to see Syria tranquil, called on the government to restore his commission and replace him in his post. But Cabouli, fearing that to replace the rebel in his command would be to reward his revolt by making him master of Galilee, with the exceptions of Acre and other sea-coast towns, instead of listening to French counsels, requested Daoud, pasha of the

Lebanon, to keep an eye on the Druses, and begged the seraskier of Damascus to detach a body of horse from Banias, with orders to sweep both banks of the Jordan as far south as the Dead Sea, while he marched in person at the front of some companies of foot into these passes, in the hope of either forcing Akeel to fight, or intercepting his flight to the South.

Such is Akeel Aga ; a man racy of the soil ; one who has had his counterpart in every age of the history of Galilee. What Akeel is to-day, Judas of Gamala was in the days of Christ, and Joshua ben Sapphias was in the days of Paul.

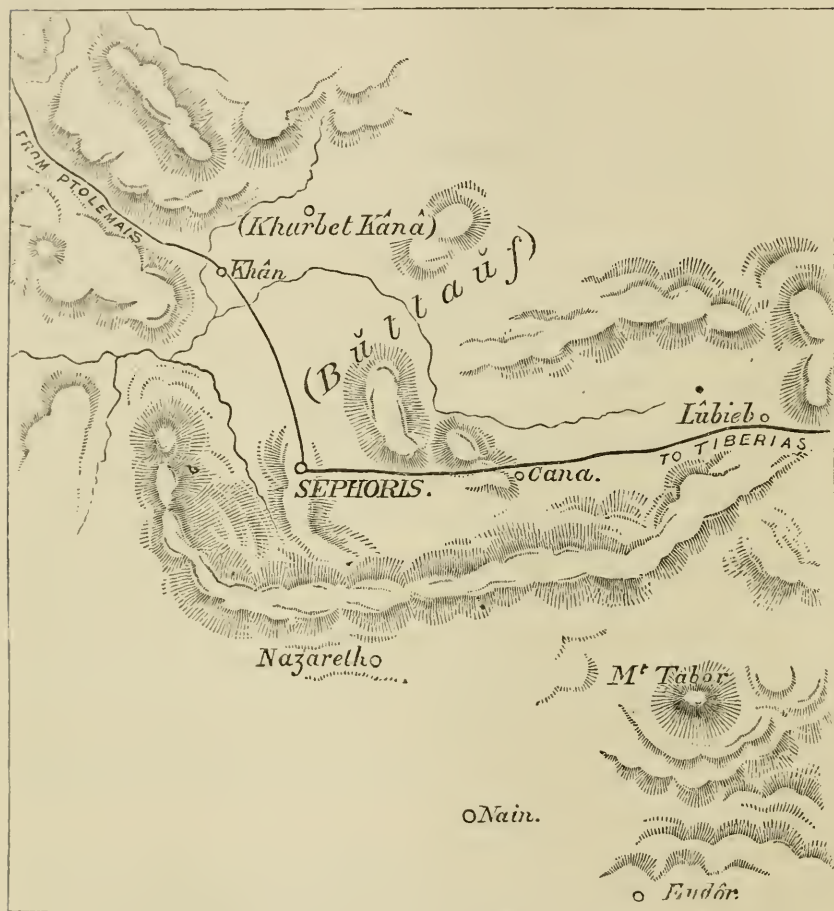
CHAPTER XVIII.

PROVINCE OF GALILEE.

GALILEE has always been renowned as the garden of Syria. Everything grows on its soil, from the Caspian walnut to the Egyptian palm. While the hills of Judah are stern and bare, and the meadows of Sharon burnt and dry, these wadies of Galilee are almost everywhere laughing with herbs and flowers. A forest of oak clothes the sides of Mount Carmel. Cedar clumps nestle in the clefts of Mount Hermon. Myrtles enlarge into trees, and myriads of orange blossoms throw their scent into the air. Every hill is a vineyard ; every bottom a corn-field. The delta of the Nile is not more sunny ; the vega of Granada is not more picturesque ; the ghota of Damascus is not more green and bright. For here the fierce sun and the refreshing rain come together, and water flows through Galilee, not in tanks and pools, but poured out royally towards the sea in streams.

Going up from Acre to Nazareth, you ride along a bit of old Roman pavement which recalls the Campagna ; then by a broad camel track like the way beyond Memphis ; anon you are passing over grass land, and thorny bush, and rough rocky tracks. There is no real road ; yet every turn of the path, every change in the scene, will recall some favourite passage in either Germany, Italy, or Spain. Here you have the woods of Lucca, there the vine slopes near Xeres ; yon tell reminds you of Loja ; and a hundred terraces, rich with

the red and white grape, send you off in imagination to the Rhine. Among these softly-rounded hills, many of them clothed to the top with vines, an eye which is familiar with the scenery of Heidelberg and Ulm, may easily feel itself at home



HILL COUNTRY OF GALILEE.

It happens now, as of old, that the Arab and the Frank feel an equal attraction in the soil of Galilee. An Arab finds on it the bread and water for which he pines in the desert; a Frank can see in it the scenery and associations of his youth. There has never been a time in which this

beautiful province was not peopled by a mixture of races from the East and West.

At the period when our Lord was a child in Nazareth, one of its midland towns—lying on the slope of a hill about four miles from the capital, Sephoris—Galilee was inhabited by a population of Greeks, Jews, Egyptians, Cypriotes, Italians, Arabs ; men speaking separate idioms, following hostile fashions, and kneeling to rival gods. Events had brought these races into the land. Asher, unable to subdue the great cities of the plain and coast—for the Hebrew was a bad rider and a worse sailor, and the rich flats belong to men who can rein a horse, as surely as the isles and shores belong to men who can handle ships—had left them in the hands of that proud race of horsemen and seamen, the English of antiquity, whose cities were Tyre and Sidon, and who defended the plains against Barak and David with the same valour and success which they had shown in defending the coasts against pirates and invaders from the West. When these strong cities had fallen before enemies fighting from the sea, the people had retreated towards the hills, carrying with them their arts, their riches, their intelligence, and their gods ; and the dykes being broken by their fall, wave after wave poured over from the sea into Galilee ; Cypriotes, Egyptians, Macedonians, Romans ; each wave of invasion flinging new blood into the houses, introducing new arts into the country, and planting strange deities in the groves and temples.

Thus, the people of Galilee had become a mixed though they were not a blended community. Most of the reapers and sowers of grain were of Syrian stock ; of the Canaanite rather than of the Arab branch. The vine-dressers and husbandmen were mostly Jews ; but Jews who were considered by the men of Judah as provincials. Many of the artizans, most of the traders dwelling in towns, were descended from those princes of Tyre and Sidon who had been driven by Alexander and Pompey from the sea. Other artizans and traders had come in the wake of foreign

armies from Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. In cities which lay along the coast, like Ptolemais and Tyre, and in strong inland forts like Sephoris and Gadara, lived the more supple and artistic Greeks; the workers in gold and marble, the rhetoricians and painters, the orators, dancers, amatory poets; the professors of every art, and, as the Jews considered them, the propagators of every vice. From Italy, from Gaul and Spain, a more robust, and perhaps a more licentious rabble, had been poured over the country to eat it up; legionaries, lawyers, gladiators, courtezans, charioteers, procurators and police. But the most picturesque figures in this picturesque group have still to be named. Through the midst of these peasants of the soil, these Jews of the hamlet, these Greek and Egyptian strangers of the city, roved the wild and pastoral tribes, the untamed children of Ishmael and Esau; men who still dwelt under their black tents, driving their flocks and herds from valley to valley, coming with the verdure, going with the dearth, and owning no allegiance to either Cæsar or to his tributary kings.

These rival lords of the soil—Jew, Greek, and Arab, never mixed with each other, never married, never dwelt together, never fused into one people, like the populations of Ulster, Canada, and the Cape; but kept in their own lines and their own tribes; each man fearing his neighbour as a foe; distinct in blood, in aspect, and in faith, like the Metuali and the Turk, the Maronite and the Druse, the Armenian and the Frank, of the present hour. No art of Greece was bright enough, no might of Rome was strong enough to fuse and bind them. The lion could not persuade the lamb to lie down. The Jew would not bend in spirit. In dress, in custom, and in character, the native and the stranger were as rivals and offenders to each other; forbidden by law, and by habit which is stronger than law, to eat of the same dish, to drink of the same cup, to lie on the same bed, to walk with the same staff. A jar, a knife, a sack which a stranger touched with his fingers became in the eyes of a Jew unclean. This dark and unsocial spirit

had no existence among the blithe and radiant Greeks ; it was a Jewish feeling, based on what the Separatist imagined to be his Sacred Law. But in order that two men shall not come together, it is only required that one shall fly from the other. A dozen generations of Greeks and Jews had lived in the same wadies of Galilee, and the people had grown no nearer in love and fellowship than they were on that day when one side stood red with triumph, the other lay crushed by defeat. Nor was a change in their relations likely to come about so long as the empire of Jewish law should last. How could it come to pass in a nation of Separatists? A Jew could not sleep in a Greek city ; a Syrian was not suffered to enter a Hebrew door.

Speaking then in a broad way of this mixed population of Galilee, it may be said that the Greeks lived in walled cities, the Jews in open towns, the Syrians in huts and sheds, the Arabs in nomadic tents.

In such great cities as Ptolemais, Sephoris, and Gadara, the public life was that of an Asiatic Athens, and the language of commerce, learning, and society, was Greek. In his own house, among his own family, a Jew might speak Aramaic, the old idiom of his race, the mother-tongue of Hebrew, as Anglo-Saxon is of English ; that dialect of Abram and Laban, of Rachel and Leah, which in the time of the kings had become a learned language among Jews, as Anglo-Saxon is now among Britons ; but which the course of events had revived and extended until it had replaced among common people, for common uses, the more elastic and poetic idiom of David and Isaiah. Again, the Ishmaelites from beyond Jordan spoke a dialect of Arabic, which Haroun al Raschid would have been puzzled to translate, though Solomon would perhaps have been able to understand it ; for that Hebrew tongue which Moses and the tribes had brought away from Egypt, was not the language which Joseph and the eleven had carried to the Nile, but a fresh growth from the old tongue and the new country ; an idiom which in its turn had begun to fall away after the

Hebrews conquered Syria, until, in the days after the captivity and return, it had wholly disappeared. In the Galilee of Christ, an Arab would have been able to read the Psalms more fluently than a Jew.

The only tongue that could pretend to be a common vehicle for all these families was that of Greece. Every man of a higher grade than a hewer of wood and drawer of water, every man who had to move about the province, who had to deal with the stranger, to appear in a law court, to consult a physician, to discharge any public function, in fact, the merchant, citizen, priest, and courtier, was compelled to practise Greek. It was the only medium of the court, the college, and the camp. In the time when our Lord was a child at Nazareth, this noble language had that predominance in Galilee which English has acquired in Calcutta, French in Algiers, and Turkish in Stamboul.

The gods of Galilee had been multiplied, but they had not been changed. The soldiers of Alexander and of Cæsar, tolerant as Pagans were of all local deities, had rather encouraged than repressed the religions which they found prevailing on the soil. Zeus and Aphrodite feared no rivals. Coming into this country with the phalanx and the legion, they had taken their places quietly in a pantheon large enough for all.

Syria is the prolific soil of creeds ; the source from which has sprung nearly all the more vivid and enduring systems of the world. Phœnicia lent its gods to Egypt, Egypt to Greece, and Greece to Rome ; so that when Venus and Jupiter returned to Galilee in the wake of Cæsar, they were only coming home to their parent soil.

In like manner, the Jews, the Christians, and the Moslems, trace back their faith to these Syrian shores, on which there has always been, as there is even now, an abounding nursery of religious creeds. In the days of Herod the Great, as many deities fought for supremacy in Galilee as fight in the Lebanon now ; Ashtoreth ruling over the Sidonians, Molech over the Syrians, Isis over the Egyptians, Dagon over the

Philistines, Manah over the Ishmaelites, Artemis over the Greeks, Jupiter over the Romans.

If any man could have fused these nations into one people—making the Maccabean Jew a fellow-citizen of the many-sided Greek—that man would have been found in Herod the Great ; a prince who, from being a mere captain in Galilee, had risen by natural genius and Cæsar's favour to a position higher than the height of David's throne.

CHAPTER XIX.

HEROD THE GREAT.

BY birth an Arab, by profession a Jew, by necessity a Roman, Herod was by culture and by choice a Greek. All his tastes, his pleasures, his studies were Attic. He loved to imitate the Ionian architecture, to revive the Olympic games ; he spent his leisure in reading the poets and historians of Athens ; he gave Hellenic names to his children ; he stamped on his coins the helmet and shield, as though claiming for his house a Macedonian descent. An Arab as Napoleon was a Corsican, a Jew as Henri Quatre was a Catholic, a Roman as Mohammed Ali was a Turk, Herod was an Hellene of his free choice ; with all the strength and all the weakness which belonged to an Asiatic Greek ; being graceful, tolerant, quick, luxurious, while he was at the same time cruel, faithless, selfish, and insincere.

His freedom from the darker passions of his race, was a power which he well knew how to use in dealing with his Greek and Syrian subjects ; though it proved a weakness to him when he had to control the Separatist Jews. In one respect he breathed the Jewish spirit and played the Jewish game, for he joined to a splendid taste in art, to a vast capacity for war, and to a burning lust of territory, the Separatist's hope of driving out the conquerors of Syria, dividing the Oriental empire of Augustus, and stretching his hands, like Solomon, from the Euphrates to the sea.

To this end, he tore the crown from the Maccabees, swept away their Sanhedrin, thinned the new princely families by his sword. With a strong hand he divided the great offices which ought never to have been joined ; separating once more the Temporal from the Spiritual Powers. Herod sent to Babylon for a new high priest, whom he found in Ananelus, a man of the sacerdotal house. When Ananelus fell, through an intrigue of the hareem, and Aristobulus, his Maccabean successor, was put to death, Herod sent to Alexandria for Simon, son of Boëthus (probably a kinsman of Onias), married his daughter, and made him high priest. In every action of his reign, Herod courted the commons at the expense of their princes ; seeking by art, profession, and expenditure, to rouse in them a hope that they had found in him the Deliverer for whom they daily cried to Heaven. A new palace was laid out on Zion ; new synagogues were added to Bezetha ; the city walls were raised and strengthened in every part ; and towers were built on the northern side, where the Assyrian camp came nearest to the wall. Baths, bastions, gates, seemed to rise from the ground by magical arts. Jerusalem had not been so splendid in Solomon's days ; for Herod could command into his service of improvement the masons and architects of Greece. It is scarcely a figure of speech to say that he rebuilt Zion as Nero after him rebuilt Rome, leaving a city of marble where he had found one of mud and lime.

At length, as a visible type of the restored kingdom of Solomon, he commenced a new and more costly Temple than had ever yet been raised in the name of God.

It seemed as though he might succeed, in spite of the barriers raised up against him by the Oral Law, in reconciling Jew and Greek. He chose his wives as much from policy as from love. He won the Maccabeans to his side by marrying Mariamne, the daughter of Alexander ; the populace by marrying Mariamne, the daughter of Simon, their new high priest. In like manner he conciliated the nobles of Samaria by wedding Malthace, one of the noblest

damsels of Sebaste. In the Gentile cities he was adored ; and in Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, he was equally liked and feared. Externally, the chief obstacle to an empire spreading from Euphrates to the sea, was Aretas, king of Petra ; one of those dashing emirs of the desert who had never succumbed to the Roman arms. Aretas not only repulsed his enemies beyond the Moab mountains, but swept into Galilee, ravaged Esdraelon, and rode with his light horse over the Carmel range. Unable to subdue this Arab prince, Herod made offers to him of peace and friendship ; settling their frontier lines, and asking his daughter in marriage for Antipas, then his favourite son, and natural heir to his crown. When peace was signed between Jew and Arab, Herod built for himself a country house at Macherus, on the Moab frontier ; a palace, a garden, a bath, a guard-room, a tower ; which in a few years became the strongest city standing east of the Dead Sea. Through his garrison at Macherus, and his kinsmen in Petra, Herod was able to control the Desert, and during the rest of his long reign the husbandmen of Judah and Galilee could till their soil with very little fear of being plundered by the nomadic tribes.

Who was now like unto Herod the Great ? The Maccabean party in Jerusalem was crushed. The Boëthus family served in the Temple. In Sebaste, in Sephoris, his power was more firmly established than even in Jerusalem and Jericho. Cæsar treated him as a brother. From Damascus to Alexandria his voice was heard and his arm was felt. In the pomp of his court, in the number of his troops, in the width of his dominion, who could compare with him ? Simon, the most fortunate of all the Maccabees, had been a mere sheikh, the soldier of a tribe ; Herod was a mighty prince, the successor and the rival of their greatest king. What marvel, then, that many of those Separatists who were praying for a Messiah should have turned to him, and that the Herodians should have become a sect in the synagogue, a party in the court ?

But the king's unrivalled genius, guided by prudence,

courtesy, and patience, failed to overcome the bigotries fostered in his people by the Oral Law. The grounds of hostility between Jew and Greek lay deep in the nature of their faith, and in that stage of their growth nothing save a spiritual action could have changed them. Herod fought against the Separatist spirit with a secular arm, and the chivalry which he displayed in dealing with the professors of these adverse creeds was one cause of his failure to reconcile them to each other. In truth, Herod was too large a man for that part of false Messiah which events were thrusting on him. He could not play the hypocrite night and day. Having taken his seat near the holy place, having tasted the paschal lamb and the bitter herbs, having put the phylacteries on his brow, and broadened the bands on his cloak, his means of kindling the Pharisaic imagination had come to an end. Not being a Separatist in soul, he was unable to sound the new depths and shallows of Jewish life, even so far as to answer the popular desire in external show. It was hard for him to talk, impossible to feel, like a partizan of the Oral Law.

Herod aimed at two points which stand far apart—at being received as a servant of the One God, and as a champion of all the gods. He would have liked to garner the political advantages of being a Jew, while enjoying the personal delights of being a Greek. In pursuance of this vain dream, while he was restoring the palace of David on Mount Zion, under the city wall near the Bethlehem gate, he built a Greek palace for his pleasures at Herodion, the Mount of Paradise, near that Bethlehem khan in which the true Messiah was about to be born. But in all these compromises between Jew and Greek, Herod was frank and open; never hiding what he did and what he thought; letting the Gentiles know that he never failed to observe the feasts of Purim and Passover; and showing the Jews that in cities which he loved much more and favoured much less than Jerusalem—the lustrous Jericho, the pillared Sebaste, the sea-washed Cæsarea—he went up to the temples of

Zeus and Artemis. The people knew all his ways. They told each other in the gateway, that a prince whom many Jews called their Messiah, had raised a shrine to Apollo in the Isle of Rhodes, and in the city of Antioch had revived the Olympic games ; and they learned to curse him in their hearts, as a man who had put strangers on a level with the holy race.

In like manner, this spirit of Pagan courtesy and conciliation failed between the Jewish sects, just as it had failed between Jew and Greek. While he was rebuilding the great Temple on Moriah, Herod had given orders to rebuild the Samaritan temple in Gerizim. When he was marrying Mariamne, daughter of the popular high priest in Jerusalem, he had offered his hand and throne to Malthace, a noble maiden of Sebaste. These efforts to heal the great feud of ages had only ended in vexing his friends and maddening his foes. The Samaritan priests could not forgive his being a Jew ; the Jewish priests could not endure his Gerizim temple and his Samaritan wife.

Thus, a man who had read more of Homer and Hesiod than of Micah and Jeremiah, and who was blind to many of the subtleties and distinctions of the Jewish faith, though he made himself master of the land by force, exhausted his genius in the vain attempt to make Syria into a nation on the principles of a cultured and liberal Greek.

Beyond the weaknesses which had their source in this tolerant condition of Herod's mind, his personal life was such as to estrange from him the sympathies of all good and honest men. In freedom of living, not less than in genius, valour, and success, he reproduced in Syria the image of an old Greek tyrant. Some writers have perceived a reflex of Herod in our own Henry the Eighth. That a few points of character and fortune may be found in the two men is not to be denied ; but Henry had passed through a clean and winsome youth ; while no part of the great Arab's life had ever been pure. If Herod had nine wives, all living at the same time, or near it, he had also a far greater

number of favourites who were not his wives. The most famous of his many queens was Mariamne, the Maccabean; of his many concubines, Cleopatra, queen of Egypt: he murdered the first in his rage, and he coldly designed to betray the second to death. In his love affairs he was Egyptian rather than Jewish; for he took to his bed more than one woman who was nearer of kin to him than the Oral Law allowed. One of his wives was his brother's child, another was his sister's child.

One of his earliest crimes was that massacre of priests and nobles, seventy in number, on which he based his power. His private murders were uncounted; but it is matter of record that he caused his brother-in-law, Aristobulus, to be drowned; that he slew his wife's grandfather, Hyrcanus; that he killed his uncle Joseph and his sister's husband, Cortobanus; that he put Antipater, his own first-born son, to death. Household murder stained his hearth to the last. He not only took away the life of his proud queen Mariamne, but strangled the two princes, Alexander and Aristobulus, his sons by her. He killed their aged grandmother, Alexandra. Some of his nearest friends and companions—Dositheus, Gadias, Lysimachus—he either strangled or clove in twain. As age grew heavy upon him, and the dream of empire faded away, his indolent ferocity increased, and the lightest fear that fell upon his heart provoked an order to shed blood. As he neared the grave, life seemed to have lost all beauty in his eyes. In every part of Palestine, aged men, unoffending women, young children, were put to the sword. Among other tragedies caused by his rage and fear, that swoop of soldiers on the city of Bethlehem, though it was one of the least, is the best remembered of all his crimes.

In the very year of that massacre of innocents, this splendid and wicked prince perished like a dog, dying in the great palace which he had built for himself in Jericho; not of old age, but of putrid sores; not in the midst of honour and respect, in the presence of wife and child, but

surrounded by quarrelling kinsmen and conspiring slaves. One slave, named Simon, declaring himself the Jewish Messiah, placed the dead man's crown upon his brow, enlisted a troop of Arabs from Perea, plundered the royal palace of its treasures, and burnt the magnificent pile to its foundations. Many of the people hailed this slave as Christ and King ; until Valerius Gratus, the Roman general, marching against him, overthrew his forces, and struck off his head.

The great kingdom of Herod, recovered from a slave and his gang of marauders by the Roman arms, was not destined to outlive him. Antipas Herod, his eldest son by his Samaritan queen, Malthace, got Galilee and Perea, with the Greek title of Tetrarch, ruler of a fourth part. Archelaus, a younger son of the same queen, had Samaria and Judea, with the Greek title of Ethnarch, ruler of a nation, and a promise from Cæsar, never to be redeemed, of the royal rank. Philip, one of his sons by his wife Cleopatra, received Batanea, Trachonitis, Auranitis, all beyond Jordan, and some parts of Sharon near Jaffa, with the title of Tetrarch. Salome, sister of the great king, obtained Jamnia and Ashdod in the plain of Sharon, with Phasaelus, a new city built by Herod in the Plain of Jericho. To make these rents and fissures in the kingdom more complete, the strong Greek cities of Gaza, Hippos, and Gadara were detached from the Jewish provinces in which they stood and which they held in check. Valerius Gratus, while appearing to be only zealous for Herod's kin, took care to arrange his kingdom so that its provinces could be annexed to the empire whenever it might suit the plans of his masters in Rome.

Genius, valour, courtesy, eloquence, and taste, had come to nothing, to worse than nothing, in Herod's hands. He had crushed the nobles, but he had not raised the multitude. In fighting against the intolerant spirit of the Oral Law, he had toiled to a noble end ; but the means to that end were beyond his reach and perhaps beyond his conception. The

way to unite a crowd of hostile sects into one people, is not by pandering to every passion and delusion in its turn, but by kindling in the whole body of rivals a new spiritual passion hot enough to consume the old. Herod provided games, rites, comedies, architecture, for a society too much corrupted ever to become a nation except by being born afresh. To become one in heart, the Jew and the Greek required, not old shows, but a new spiritual life. But this new life of the spirit is a gift which kings and governors have not to give.

CHAPTER XX.

JUDAS THE GALILEAN.

AFTER Herod's death, the experiment in which he had failed was tried from another side, on Separatist principles; and the schisms and parties then dividing Galilee, town against hamlet, house against tent, altar against synagogue, temple against grove, received a crowning division in that of Pharisee against Pharisee. A new sect was now to rise in Galilee, and to be known by the name of that province; a sect more Separatist than the Separatists, and more hostile to strangers than even the Jews of Zion. They were to call themselves Zealots, as being anxious for morality and religion; and when they became formidable to the ruling powers, as they swiftly became, they were to be denounced in the Sanhedrin and the Synagogue under the names of Swordsmen and Brigands. The strife between Samaria and Judea was in a few years to be surpassed in bitterness by the great feud between Galilee and Judea.

The leader of the new schism was Judas of Gamala.

One of the worst results of that policy of Separation and isolation into which the Jews had sunk under the Maccabees, was the wild misreading of the Messianic prophecies, into which so many of the people fell. Poor peasants and fishermen heard that a Deliverer was to come; they felt the need of him in their hearts and in their lives; the more they found themselves straying like lost sheep, the more they expected a Shepherd who should restore them to the fold.

But they had ceased to understand their prophets in the old spirit of their race. They had come to mix up the Persian Vendidad with the Mosaic Pentateuch; and the political theories by which they had replaced the Mosaic Law, inclined them to expect a political Christ, a prince, a warrior, a lawgiver of the earth; a man who could drive out the strangers from their soil, who would march on Jerusalem, occupy the throne of David, and, hating all Gentile nations, dwell among his people in kingly pomp.

A Sadducee, rich in palaces and gardens, learned in the poetry and philosophy of Greece, might laugh at these dreams of potters and goatherds; yet the hope of seeing such a prince arise was so common throughout Jewry, that no man of genius, whether soldier, sorcerer, or priest, could spring into fame without exciting in thousands of eager hearts a strong belief that the Messiah for whom they waited had come at last.

Within a dozen years after the death of Herod the Great, a dozen of these false Messiahs were proclaimed by deluded and deluding crowds; the most eminent, perhaps, being Judas of Gamala, and his sons Simon and James, Hillel the Babylonian, Athrongæus the shepherd, and Simon the slave. Judas of Gamala, though his career was short, is a figure in Jewish story hardly less important than that of Herod the Great.

More than all that Akeel is suspected of desiring to accomplish against Turkey, Judas desired to effect against Rome. Akeel draws none of his passion from religious hate. He acknowledges Cabouli's caliph, prays in Cabouli's mosque. Judas of Gamala was driven forward by his spiritual frenzy even more than by his lust of secular power. But if the inspiring cause was different, the results were much the same; a considerable revolt, a yet more considerable disturbance; vexing the Romans in Galilee very much as Abd-el-Kader teased the French and as Akeel Aga distracts the Turks. Judas of Gamala being a man of the tongue even more than of the sword, his faculties of mischief could

neither be confined to a province, nor extinguished with a life.

Judas, though he is mentioned by Gamaliel as a man of Galilee, appears to have been born in Gaulonitis beyond Jordan, in Gamala, a city built on a mountain spur, shaped like a camel, whence it derived its name. This place stood on the hill side, opposite to Tarichæa, looking down upon the lake. A man of priestly lineage, an Arab of the old type, simple in life, severe in aspect, Judas conceived that like Elijah he had received a message to his countrymen from the Lord. Devoted, soul and spirit, to the Oral Law, and resolved to make the Separatist theory his rule of life, he went through the hamlets of Galilee preaching the great doctrines that national liberty is the chiefest good—that men are all equals in rank and power—that there is no king, no master in the world, save God. Men listened to his words. A party gathered round him, deeming him the Prophet that was to come. Like Judas the Maccabee, he called to his banners those only who were in despair and were ready to perish; and he taught his followers to despise pain and death, to defy the cord and the cross, and to rush on a line of swords with a gladsome alacrity which amazed the most hardened Stoics and veterans of Rome.

When Cyrenius first came into Galilee and Judea to number the people, as a basis for levying the poll-tax of a denarius—eight-pence of our present English money—per head, Judas lifted up his voice against him; denouncing his census as unlawful, his levy as impious; saying that this gift of a denarius to Cæsar was an offensive imitation of the half-stater annually paid by a Jew to God. He urged the people to resist the census and the tax. Young and ardent men threw themselves under his flag; for in the simple life and daring words of Judas they discerned the style of that Christ who was to lead them against the Gentile host.

As yet his camp had been composed of poor people from

the vineyards, and fisheries, and workshops ; but this denunciation of Cyrenius and the poll-tax brought to his side a Pharisee of high rank named Sadok ; after whose adhesion to what they announced as the national cause, the party increased in every part of Jewry, even in the Holy City. Feeling their strength, the Galileans raised the old Jewish standard ; seizing the strong places, proclaiming a holy war, and, like true Arab combatants, plundering both friend and foe. The burning of temples and groves might have been justified on religious grounds, the destruction of Greek cities and castles on military grounds ; but the followers of Judas and Sadok, despising all property which was not their own, and wishing to drive the peasants to despair, put fire to the granaries and trampled on the vines. Yet the people bore their losses with an Oriental calm. Messiah must know what he ought to do ; if the Jews suffered much from Judas, the Greeks suffered more ; and the faithful could find comfort in the thought that on the morrow of their final victory over Rome, the gold and silver of Sephoris, Ptolemais, and a hundred other cities would be all their own.

Cyrenius met this army of fanatics in the open field, broke them at a charge, and putting Judas and Sadok to a cruel death, soon scattered the remnants of their bands into all the hamlets of Galilee. The blow was prompt. The victory seemed to be complete. But it only seemed so ; sword may meet sword, but cannot root up an idea from the soul. These vine-dressers and boatmen, poor in education, but rich in faith, believing that Judas was the Messiah, come into the world to fulfil the Oral Law, and that he would either rise again in the flesh or live in the persons of his children, transferred their loyalty from the murdered prophet to his sons Simon and James. So far from being ended, the revolt of the Galileans had only just begun. But James and Simon, warned by their father's fate, kept quiet in their retreats, watching the course of events, increasing the number of their disciples, and preparing the

arms and discipline as well as the passions and animosities of a grander war.

Twenty years after their father's murder, Simon and James were at the head of a powerful sect, including most of the Jews in Galilee, many of those in Gaulonitis and Perea, not a few of those in Judea and Jerusalem, especially among the poorer classes.

A Greek who was at that time studying Jewish politics, might have ranked these Galileans between the Essenes and Pharisees, for while they were Essenic in their habits, they were Pharisaic in their opinions. With the Essenes they professed to despise riches, to reject pomp and state, to own no master, to give no titles, to kneel only to God ; with the Pharisees they expected a deliverer, a holy war, a conquest of the Romans, and a kingdom of the saints.

Unlike Herod the Great, who had tried to break down the barriers dividing Greeks and Arabs, Samaritans and Jews, so as to melt a hundred tribes and sects into one great Syrian power, having its unity of life in the Greek principle of toleration, Judas, acting in the spirit of the Oral Law, withdrew his people from all intercourse with Gentiles as a thing impolitic and profane. They were to live alone. They were to consider the Greeks as enemies. They were to shun large cities, with their Pagan temples, and their gods of bronze and stone. They were to consider the stranger as a man accursed ; and to have no traffic with him except that of blood.

In his narrow understanding, Judas of Gamala contracted that Jewish brotherhood which was already far too strait. The Pharisee's rules were wider than his soul could grasp, and the only fighting power in Jewry was now reduced into the sect of a sect.

But this warlike and devoted party grew in strength and daring ; outlived their courtly rivals called the Herodians ; struggled with and subdued their Sadducean enemies ; opposed with success the more popular Boëthusians ;

identified themselves in mass with the whole people ; and only perished out of the land when everything was lost. When Jerusalem was carried by assault, when the Temple was burnt to ashes, the gallant men who would call no man lord were exposed and sold for slaves in every market of the Roman world.

But this catastrophe was yet a long way off.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HOLY FAMILY.

FOUR miles south of the strong Greek city of Sephoris, hidden away among gentle hills, then covered from the base to the crown with vineyards and fig-trees, lay a natural nest or basin of rich red and white earth, star-like in shape, about a mile in width, and wondrously fertile. Along the scarred and chalky slope of the highest of these hills, spread a small and lovely village, which, in a land where every stone seemed to have a story, is remarkable as having had no public history and no distinguishable native name. No great road led up to this sunny nook. No traffic came into it, no legions marched through it. Trade, war, adventure, pleasure, pomp, passed by it, flowing from west to east, from east to west, along the Roman road. But the meadows were aglow with wheat and barley. Near the low ground ran a belt of gardens, fenced with loose stones, in which myriads of green figs, red pomegranates, and golden citrons, ripened in the summer sun. High up the slopes, which were lined and planted like the Rhine at Bingen, hung vintages of purple grapes. In the plain, among the corn and beneath the mulberry trees and figs, shone daisies, poppies, tulips, lilies, and anemones, endless in their profusion, brilliant in their dyes.

Low down on the hill-side sprang a well of water, bubbling, plentiful, and sweet; and above this fountain of life, in a long street straggling from the fountain to the

synagogue, rose the homesteads of many shepherds, craftsmen, and vine-dressers. It was a lovely and humble place, of which no poet, no ruler, no historian of Israel had ever yet taken note. No Rachel had been met and kissed into love at this well; no Ruth had gathered up the sheaves of barley in yon fields; no tower had been built for observation on this height; no camp had been pitched for battle in that vale. That One who would become dearer to the fancies of men than either Ruth or Rachel then walked through these fields, drew water at this spring, passed up and down the lanes of this hamlet, no seer could have then surmised. The place was more than obscure. The Arab may have pitched his black tent by the well, the magistrate of Sephoris must have known the village name, but the hamlet was never mentioned by a Jewish scribe.

In the Bible, in the Talmud, in the writings of Josephus, we search in vain for any records of this sacred place. Like its happy neighbours, Nain and Endor, it was the abode of husbandmen and oil-pressers, whose lives were spent in the synagogue and in the olive-grove, away from the bright Greek cities and the busy Roman roads. No doubt it had once been possessed of either an Arab or a Hebrew name, but we do not know that name except in its Hellenic form.

The Greeks called the town Nazaret or Nazareth.

Into this nameless Jewish hamlet, there came to live in the days of Judas of Gamala and the Zealots, Joseph of Bethlehem with his wife and Child.

Joachim of Nazareth had been already a man of great age when his wife, Anna, a woman who like Sarah had long been childless, gave birth to a daughter, whom the parents called Marian, and whom the Church calls Mary the Blessed Virgin. Though they then dwelt in the province of Galilee, her father and mother were natives of Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah and the line of David. Like many other Jews, they seem to have left the hill country of Judea, in which it was hard for the poor to find bread, and

to have settled in those busier and more prosperous parts of Palestine in which the Greeks had built cities and the Romans had made roads ; obeying a movement like that which in our own day draws the Gael to Lanark, the Parsee to Calcutta, the Arab to Algiers. They were not rich people ; they owned goats and sheep ; they lived in a good house, in the midst of a garden ; and could afford money and time for a yearly journey to Zion at the great festivals of their faith ; but Joachim and his wife were richer in blood and in repute than in flocks and herds.

The thousand years which had passed away since their father David reigned over Israel, an interval little less than that which divides yon hajjee in the green turban from his ancestor Mohammed, might serve in any country to lay the mighty low, to turn a Capet into a carter, a Plantagenet into a ploughboy. In that large flux of years, the house of David, scattered into every region of the East, into Egypt and Persia, into Babylon and Arabia, had so fallen from its high estate, that its members had been glad to practise the most ordinary trades. Hillel of Babylon was poorer than Joachim of Nazareth. But no lapse of time, no taint of poverty, will, in countries like Palestine, deprive of due honour and respect a man who is known to be descended from a royal and saintly race. Yon hajjee in the green folds may be poor enough to beg paras in the public street ; yet his fellow beggar, crouching beside him in the dust, and even dividing with him his scanty loaf, will be forward to acknowledge his princely rank ; and in the mouths of all classes of his countrymen he is still shereef and saïb, nobleman and lord. And so it fared with men of the line of David, children of the shepherd king. To be born of that stock, like Hillel and Joachim, was to possess in all Jewish eyes a sacred and inalienable grace.

Husband and wife both died in Nazareth while Marian was yet a child ; Joachim, who seems to have had another wife besides Anna, leaving another daughter named Mary (not Marian like the Virgin), a woman of mature age, who

had been married to a Jew called Clopas, or, as the name was spelt in Greek, Alphæus, and was left his widow with four or five sons. The two half-sisters dwelt together in their father's house, which by the Jewish law would come to them in equal shares, on condition that they should marry in their tribe and to their next of kin. Mary, having sons who must inherit her part of the estate, would have no rights to preserve by marrying a second time ; but Marian, her half-sister, was obliged by the law, either to marry her next of kin when she came of age, or to forfeit all share in her father's goods.

The man next of kin to Marian was Joseph of Bethlehem ; her uncle, it would seem, though some say he was her cousin ; a man already old, with sons of his own, grown up into young men. The Jewish rule was strict ; girls had no choice ; and to marry uncles was a habit of the people. Had not Herod, the reigning king, married two of his nieces ? Were not some of his granddaughters already the wives of his sons.

Joseph, the husband whom Marian was bound by law to marry, was by trade a carpenter ; tradition says a bad one, as Syrian craftsmen of the kind have always been. It may be inferred, from what is still to be seen every day in Galilee, that he built and repaired boats on the lake, as well as made frames and stools, and cut down poles for tents. Except in the Greek cities, the arts of domestic life were rude. When Joseph wrought at his trade in the village, his bench would be placed in the public way, as you see the carpenters at work in Acre and Nazareth now, and there he would saw and hammer at his planks from dawn to dusk. This occupation of a carpenter would lead him away from home, and his busiest hours when abroad would probably be spent in such Jewish hamlets as Nain and Cana among the hills, and as Bethsaida and Capernaum on the lake.

The Son of Joseph and Marian, born in the grotto, near the great khan of Bethlehem, was called JESUS ; a name

now sacred and set apart from use; then common among the Jews as either Simon or Judah, and as William and Henry among ourselves. As the boy grew in strength he was put to learn his father's trade of carpentry, and until his thirtieth year, when he became old enough to teach and preach, he was content to go about the villages of Galilee, among the followers of Judas and of his sons Simon and James, mending chairs and poles, hewing masts and beams, shaping oars and planks. Is not this the carpenter? said his neighbours of Nazareth, when he began to proclaim the gospel of fraternity and love. With the axe, the plane, the measuring line in his hand, he trudged as a boy at his father's side through these valleys of Zebulon, Issachar, and Naphthali; passing the great cities, in which they would have found no work for Jewish carpenters to do; and toiling on the farms and in the villages of their own people, among peasants, carriers, and fishermen, who had little knowledge and less appreciation of the finer arts of Greece.

The position of JESUS in this Nazareth home was something like that of David when a youth in the Bethlehem khan. His half-brothers, being Orientals, treated him, even when he was thirty years of age, as a young man: which in plain English means treating him very much as they would have done a woman and a slave. The names of these half-brothers, as well as of his cousins, the sons of Mary, being the commonest then used in Israel—James and Judah, Simon and Joses—it is impossible to say how many of them lived in the same house, or even to say which were the children of Clopas and which the children of Joseph. Living in the same town, being all of one tribe, they were known as members of one family, and are only mentioned by writers under the general designation of the Lord's brethren. Clopas left a son named James, and Joseph left a son named James. Each seems to have had a son called Judah. Three sisters lived in the house. More than these facts can hardly be stated, except by guess-work.

It is only known that of all these men and women, JESUS, like David among Jesse's children, was the youngest born.

That his mother Marian, who bore him at the age of fifteen, was fair and comely, was a constant tradition of the early Church ; a girl having a style of beauty like that of David and Solomon, which is rare in hot countries, and when it occurs is most highly prized, If the Church traditions may be trusted on such a point, backed by such evidence as the Byzantine mosaics and the early missals, the Virgin had blue eyes, a pale skin, low colour, a sweet oval face, with abundance of golden hair.

In her ways of life, she would act no otherwise than like the young Hebrew women of her time and of all times. She would rise early in the day, and going with her creel into the market-place, fill it with melons and fresh figs, with green cucumbers and grapes. At the third hour she would recite her shema, and at the ninth hour sing a psalm of David. In the evening she would go down with her pitcher to the well and fill it. On the Sabbath, after washing hands, she would go up to the synagogue on the hill-top, where she would sit among the women behind the screen, and hear the Sheliach repeat the lesson set apart for that day. For the rest of her simple and homely life, like the women of her class in these Syrian villages at the present hour, she would boil her pottage over a wood fire, lay her maize on the flat roof to dry, spin thread for domestic use, sweep the dust from her lewan at dusk, and, expecting her husband and her son to come home, spread her mats on the floor and set her viands for them in the shadiest nook of her little court.

Our Western fancies, working through an instinct of nature safer than half knowledge, have made of this simple life a pastoral full of grace and beauty. Hearing that the best years of her youth and womanhood were spent, before she yet knew grief, on this sunny hill slope, her feet being for ever among the daisies, poppies, and anemones which grow everywhere about, we have made her the patroness of all our flowers. The Virgin is our rose of Sharon, our lily

of the valley. The poetry, no less than the piety of Europe has inscribed to her the whole bloom and colouring of the fields and hedges. May is her month. Gardens are trimmed in her service, and all her chapels are decked and garlanded with nosegays. The favourites of our meadows, some of them unknown to the flora of her own Galilee, bear names which are derived from her—such as lady grass, lady smock, lady slipper, lady's key, marigold, and maiden hair. But the rose and the lily—the rose for its lustre, the lily for its purity—are, more than any others, considered as the Virgin's own. These flowers belong to the landscape of Middle Galilee no less than to the poetry of the Christian world.

Until her husband died, an event which is supposed to have happened when her son was a young man, she was once a year mounted on an ass and taken up to Jerusalem for the Passover.

Every man rich enough to spare time and money on this journey to Jerusalem was bound to make it; thousands of their neighbour Galileans went up to the Temple every year; still more every second or third year; the bands setting out at one time, marching by the same roads, and keeping close together for their mutual help. These Passover pilgrims from Galilee formed a long caravan; the women and old men riding on asses and camels; the men and young lads trudging by their sides; the little folks running about from one group to another, playing with the dogs, gathering the wild fruit, and sometimes getting lost. Avoiding Samaria, as a country of heretics, contact with whom would have rendered a Separatist Jew unclean, they marched by the lower road, though it carried them east of the Jordan and through a somewhat perilous tract. Better, said they, the chance of being robbed than the certainty of being defiled. So they wended through Gilead and Ammon; camping near a well at sunset; lighting their fires of sticks, and cooking their frugal meal; consisting of a dish of lentils and parched corn, fried in a little oil, with a melon,

a cucumber, and a bunch of grapes. Recrossing the Jordan at Bethabara, a famous ford on the river, ten miles eastward of Jericho, they marched under the green date trees of the plain to the city and the mountain base, and then toiled up the rocky passes of the wilderness towards Zion, carrying fronds of palm and branches of myrtle in their hands, and singing their shemas and hosannas as they moved impetuously along the mountain roads.

Their journey ended, the company broke up near Bethany, a poor village on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet, looking down the glen over the desert ways by which



SYRIAN BOOTHS.

they had come up. Of all those thousands on thousands, a few might have friends in Jerusalem who were able to receive them into their houses ; only a few ; the concourse of people being too vast for the whole body of pilgrims to find shelter within the walls. Every man lodged as it

pleased him best. Some got into the poor little hamlets round about ; some pitched their tents on the hill-sides and in the shady glens ; but the thousands on thousands were content with the little green booths, called succoth, a wattle of twigs and leaves, such as Jacob had made for himself in Canaan, and such as the Sharon peasant still builds for his family at the Jerusalem gate.

Mizpeh, Olivet, Gibeon, Rephaim, sparkled with these booths and tents, the slopes of the Cedron being alive with men and women, with sheep and goats, with camels and asses, while the great fountains of En-rogel and Siloam were thronged from morning to night with girls drawing water for man and beast.

The men from Galilee are said to have pitched their tents and built their booths on a part of Olivet, a little north of the road leading over its brow ; one of three mamelons into which the ridge is divided by nature ; a circumstance which is supposed to have led to that mamelon being subsequently known by the name of Galilee hill, or hill of the men of Galilee.

CHAPTER XXII.

ROMAN JUDEA.

FROM year to year, as the Holy family came up from Nazareth to Zion for the feasts of their faith, they would find the great city changing in aspect and in character ; becoming less and less Jewish, more and more Greek ; the plain house of stone giving way to the marble front, the portico, the colonnade, and the paved court. All through these years of the Lord's youth, the Temple was in progress ; for the princes of Herod's line were all artists and builders, and it was the pride of Archelaus to carry on the structures which his father had commenced.

Then came another change. A man coming up to Purim, or Passover, found Roman soldiers braving about the lanes ; strange hucksters vending goods in the markets and bazaars , a Gentile ruler keeping his court in Herod's palace and his armoury in David's tower.

Herod's will, executed by Roman officers, held for a short time ; in Judea, for a very short time. On the day of his death in Jericho, two strong and energetic factions had raised their heads in Zion ; the Noble party which the Maccabees had put down ; and that Separatist party, now become the Popular party, which Herod the Great had crushed. These two factions, comprising many of the ablest and richest men in Jerusalem, had made war against the Herodians, the Boëthusians, and the new settlement of

Judea under Herod's will ; the Noble party, actively and with all weapons ; hoping to cast down both Archelaus the Herodian Ethnarch, and Joazar the Boëthusian high priest, and to seize their powers ; the Popular party negatively and with some reserve ; for although they hated Archelaus as the son of a Samaritan queen, and would have helped to depose him at the risk of bringing on their country a civil war, they had no such animosity against Joazar the high priest, a man of popular manners, of blameless life, and of true sacerdotal descent.

The Nobles, waging war against the Herodians in the palace and the Boëthusians in the Temple, had been led by Annas (Ananus), son of Seth, a man of high birth, of great wealth, of strong and persevering intellect ; and in the course of a ten years' struggle they had succeeded in crushing the Herodian party, and sending Archelaus to Rome to answer for his crimes in Cæsar's court. It could not be said that the nobles had won this battle by native virtue and native strength ; the Separatists, the strongest party in Jerusalem, had helped them to ruin their half-Samaritan prince ; but they had gained their triumph mainly by the aid of Rome, to which country they had sold their liberty and independence, in exchange for a party triumph and a personal lease of power.

In his short reign of ten years, Archelaus had made many foes, and every party imagined they would gain by this weak man's fall. His brother, Antipas of Galilee, being an elder son of Herod, and great with Cæsar, had fancied that he must succeed to his inheritance in Samaria and Judea, and that with the addition of these provinces to his state he would obtain the royal rank. The priests and nobles of Sebaste had joined in accusing Archelaus, from a wish to get rid of their dependence on Jerusalem. Thus, on his arrival in Rome, Archelaus had found himself the victim of every party in Palestine ; Antipas charging him with having governed his people for his own advantage, not for Cæsar's glory ; the chief men of Sebaste and Jerusalem with having

broken their sacred laws by taking a prohibited woman to be his wife.

Like all the princes of his line, Archelaus had been lax in love. Falling into a passion for Glaphyra, queen of Libya, a young and beautiful widow, the daughter of a Cappadocian king, he had put away his own wedded Mariamne, to make Queen Glaphyra his only wife. In her youth, Glaphyra had been married to his brother Alexander, and had borne two sons, Tigranes and Alexander, to that prince. After her first husband's death, she had accepted Juba, king of Libya. When that prince died, and she returned to Syria, Archelaus had seen her and begged her hand, which she had been only too prompt to give. Such a marriage was said to be condemned by the Oral Law ; though the question of legality, like that between our own Henry and Catharine, might never have been raised but for the secular interests which hung on the validity of a religious rite.

The Romans in Syria, like the French in Algiers, the English in Bengal, were only too ready in judging and deposing kings. The prince who had risked everything for his love, arrived in Italy to find that everything was lost, even love itself ; for no sooner had the senate condemned him to the forfeiture of his province than Glaphyra expired of remorse and shame. Bereft of his rank, his money, and his queen, Antipas was driven away to Vienne, in Gaul, where he spent in exile the remainder of his miserable days.

Cyrenius, then serving his second term of office in Antioch, received orders from Rome to annex Samaria and Judea to the empire ; holding them with Roman troops and bringing them within the pale of Roman law. Sebaste and Jerusalem being far from Antioch, the mountains difficult and the people turbulent, he was allowed to treat these new districts of the empire as a sub-province, placing them under a Procurator of their own, with a provincial capital at Cæsarea on the coast. The new Procurator of Samaria and Judea was armed with the powers of a general and a judge.

Cyrenius came in person to Jerusalem ; in part to levy

the poll-tax ; but mainly to see the party chiefs, and to settle a form of local government. Joazar, then high priest, an idol of the crowd, by whom he had been elected to his office, induced the people of Jerusalem to make a true return of their numbers and their properties ; a service which the instant revolt of Judas in Galilee enabled Cyrenius to appreciate. But the Nobles having already made their terms with Rome, and Cyrenius knowing that they were the only persons in Jerusalem who could be considered as permanently reconciled to a foreign yoke, felt no scruple about degrading the Boëthusian Joazar from the high priesthood, and raising to that great office the ablest friend of Rome, the leader of the Noble party, Annas, son of Seth.

Coponius, the first Procurator of Samaria and Judea under this new settlement, placed a small garrison in Zion and a guard at the Temple gate ; but he lived at Cæsarea on the sea, leaving the civil government of Jerusalem to Annas and the partners in his glory and his shame.

The common people, who saw their independence bartered away, who found the popular Boëthusians ousted by these aristocratic Sethians, had to bear as they could the fate of outwitted and vanquished men. With the Roman legions came the Roman fiscal system ; harbour dues, port dues, town dues, customs, excise ; in the streets a house-tax, in the markets a fruit-tax, everywhere a poll-tax. The Jews began to groan under the weight, and sicken under the names, of these Roman imposts. More than the rest, a head-tax galled them ; the Separatists understanding it as a sign of their subjection, as indeed it was, and thinking with the Galileans that the payment of this denarius to Cæsar was a travesty of the shekel which they gave to God.

The faces of these poor Jews of the street and market-place grew sad. Not being priests and nobles, having had no foe to punish, no fight to win, they found none of the consolations which they had expected from changing a native for a foreign rule. They only saw that their nationality was gone, that a stranger dwelt in Zion, that a distant prince

disposed of their fortunes and their lives, while the man who ruled them with the sword could scarcely be considered as higher in rank than the slave of a slave. They were denied that grain of comfort which an Oriental finds in seeing and kissing the foot that grinds him into dust. For many years after Archelaus left Jerusalem, the poor Jews rarely saw the faces of their lords. Augustus dwelt in Rome, Cyrenius in Antioch, Coponius in Cæsarea. Jerusalem was garrisoned by a subaltern, governed by a priest.

Roman officers, whether Legates in Antioch or Procurators in Judea, held their posts, like our governors of Malta and Gibraltar, for three or four years only, and were then replaced ; though it might chance that a man who was dear to an emperor, or to an emperor's wife, might hold his seat for two or more terms. The following persons reigned at Antioch during the life of JESUS CHRIST on earth :—Cyrenius and Saturninus ; Varus ; Cyrenius a second time ; Metellus ; Piso ; Saturninus a second time ; Pomponius Flaccus. During the same period of time, the following procurators lived in Cæsarea :

Coponius	6 to 10 A.D.
Marcus Ambivius	10 to 13
Annius Rufus	13 to 14
Valerius Gratus	14 to 25
Pontius Pilate	25 to 35

For fifteen years, that is to say, from the reign of Coponius to that of Gratus, the settlement made by Cyrenius was undisturbed ; Annas remaining high priest, and the aristocratic party ruling Jerusalem in the name of Rome. But Gratus, a new man, sent out by a new Cæsar, courting other parties in Judea, removed Annas from his high place, and set up Ishmael, son of Fabus, in his stead. This change caused a mighty uproar in the Temple courts, where the Nobles declared that no high priest had ever yet been deprived by a Gentile judge—a declaration which was hardly true—and the Jewish congregations were told that a high priest could only be deposed from his office by God.

Gratus soon found that he had made a false move ; though he feared to go back even more than to go on. He might address his courtesies to Ishmael, and compel the people to pay him outward homage ; but he could not make them love him and obey him. With or without an official title, Annas remained the true high priest ; and in the end, Gratus had to yield before this popular force. Degrading Ishmael from his office, the Procurator restored peace to society in Zion by raising Eleazar, a son of Annas, to the vacant seat ; and permitting Annas, under the name of Sagan, deputy, to discharge the spiritual duties and conduct the ceremonial rites.

The Noble party proved itself in fact, what it had always been in theory, the trustiest friend of Rome. Yet Gratus, having yielded this point from fear of disturbing the public peace, not from his own sense of right, could not help feeling that he had been foiled by Annas ; and when he believed himself strong enough to force his way, he put down Eleazar and set up Simon, son of Kamith, in his post. But the Kamithians proved as weak as the Fabusians, and his second act of opposition was made in vain. Annas had become too powerful in Jerusalem for any man to govern that city against his will. In less than a year, Simon fell as Ishmael had fallen ; and Gratus made peace with the Nobles, by raising Joseph Caiaphas, the Sagan's son-in-law, to the vacant throne.

When Pilate came into Syria, bringing with him his wife Claudia and a Roman household, he changed in some degree the method of Roman rule ; living less in Cæsarea, more in Zion ; but he was too wise a man to meddle with the Jewish priests in affairs of faith and worship. He kept on good terms with the noble families, striving to win over to his government every one who could help him to preserve the public peace. Annas remained Sagan, Caiaphas High Priest, during the whole ten years of Pilate's reign.

But if the Noble Party were content with an arrangement that gave them all the ceremonial, and nearly all the civil authority in the State, the Popular party, excluded from

office, and heavily taxed, were much less satisfied with their Roman masters and their partisans the priests. Great numbers of poor herdsmen and artizans became infected with the Galilean views of Simon and James. The Galilean party—being warmer in zeal than the Separatists—was becoming more and more identified with the Popular party, even in Zion. Their spirit was abroad, and the signs of their progress could be read by strangers. When Pilate rode up from Cæsarea to attend the feasts, the people hooted his banners, derided his eagles, and abused his guards. The Gentile glitter and pomp offended their sight; the effigies of Cæsar struck them as impious. They knew that Pilate was not a bad man, not a severe man; they saw that he was courteous, affable, just to every one; but they also felt that he was a stranger in their land, and master of their properties and their lives. This last was what they could not bear. On inquiry, the Procurator learned that a sect of fanatics had grown up in Galilee, which called no man lord, and that the opinions of this sect were becoming common among the Jews.

As year by year, the Roman yoke cut deeper into their flesh, the people, finding no comfort in their aristocratic rulers, prayed more and more loudly for that Christ who was to come. One after another, Messiahs were announced, though the end of most of these dreamers was a swift and cruel death. They appealed to the sword, and they perished by the sword. In time the legions got accustomed to these military Messiahs who flung brands into Greek buildings, made war on Doric sculptures, and rushed with a shout on the Roman lines.

But Pilate was still young in office when he heard the name of a Prophet of another type; of a man who carried no sword, yet drew after him a mighty crowd; who never called himself Messiah; who never cursed the Gentiles; who never mentioned the subject of a holy war. The name of this Prophet was John. The scene of his preaching was the Wilderness and the Plain of the Dead Sea.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE WILDERNESS.

THE Wilderness in which John the Baptist dwelt until his thirtieth year, and into which JESUS when his time arrived passed for his forty days of prayer and watching, begins at the gates of Hebron and Jerusalem, spreads beyond and below these cities to the south and west, and covers the mountain slopes of Judah from the crest of the high table-land of Ramah and Olivet down to the fountain of Elisha and the shores of the Dead Sea. It is a tract of country about the size and shape of Sussex; not being a mere waste of scorching sands, herbless and waterless all the year, like the deserts of El Arish and Gizeh, but only a dry, unpeopled region, in which the wells are few, the trees low and stunted, the wadies full of stones instead of water, and the caves tenanted by leopards and wolves. It contains no town, not even a village. It has no road, no khan. The fox, the vulture, the hyena prowl about its solitudes. But even in the wilderness nature is not so stern as man. Here and there, in clefts and basins, and on the hill-sides, grade on grade, you observe a patch of corn, a clump of olives, a single palm; but the men who sow the grain, who shake down the fruit, are nowhere to be seen. They dare not stay upon the grounds which they rip with their rude ploughs, or in which with careless husbandry they watch the olive trees grow. They hie away for protection to the hamlets and watch-towers on the hill-tops; to Maon, Tekoa,

Bethlehem, and Bethany ; for the Taámra Bedaween claim to be lords of the soil, and the spring grass and wild herbage tempt the Adouan from El Belka, the ancient Ammon, into these stony parts. No Syrian peasant dares to build his hut on land over which a Bedaween spreads his tent. In the Wilderness of Judah, the children of Esau are still what they were of old, the only abiding sheikhs and kings.

Suraya's raid into the Arab camp at Hebron, and the murder of those young men near Solomon's Pools, have roused the Bedaween tribes into fury, not only against the Turks, their eternal enemies, but against every stranger who may appear to be travelling through the country under Turkish escort. Hearing of this revengeful passion on their side, and having no desire to be shot under a mistake of flag, we ride over from our tents on Olivet to Abu Dis, an Arab village standing on the hill over against Bethany to the south ; where we find the old chief, Mohammed Arikât ; a man half-peasant, half-Bedaween ; a thief, a rebel, some say an assassin, who in his old age, giving up open robbery, has settled down into a safer and more profitable business as agent between those Frank consuls who wish to protect their countrymen from peril, and the Bedaween shiekhs who regard all strangers as their natural prey. Arikât deals in escorts and passes. Paying head-money to the Adouan, and dividing his profits with the Ehtaimât and the Abu n' Sair, two mongrel Arab tribes who skulk about Jericho and the Wady Kelt, he is able to offer you a protection from assault in the wilderness, which Suraya cannot always give. The bargain may be lawless ; but in Syria where is the man who ever thinks of law ? The peril of that road from Jerusalem to Jericho is an ancient text. Christ used it in the most beautiful of his parables ; but no good Samaritan travels that way now, and the roadside inn is a desolate heap of stones. Bowing to facts, the Franks have made a compact with the robbers ; so many piastres, so many lances ; and you may learn as far away as Pera and Cairo how much black mail you must pay to Arikât and his

partners, if on going down from Jerusalem to Jericho you should prefer to avoid the chance of falling among thieves.

Our errand is soon done. Arikât offers the service of his son Sheikh Mohammed, and of his nephew Sheikh Abdallah, two fiery young fellows, who come out from the house to see us, shining in shawls and pistols, ready for either a journey or a fray ; counterparts in look and dress, in age and gait, of the young men whom we saw dying and dead in the Hebron road. They hope that peace will be with us. We give them our hands and cigarettes ; and after smoking a whiff of tobacco, and naming the Wady Alya as our place of rendezvous, we trot off towards Bethlehem, in the convent of which we propose to rest and sleep.

Early next day in the saddle, we first sweep round the fields in which the shepherds watched their flocks by night ; then ride up to the Mount of Paradise, that singular hill on which Herodion, the gay and voluptuous country house of Herod, rose among gardens and colonnades in the day when Christ was born in the neighbouring cave. Leaving the camel track behind, we strike the wilderness, due east, into the country owned by the Taámra tribe ; our path being mostly down mountainous chasms, steep as the angle of a Gothic roof ; now climbing a little way over stony hills, now running along dry river beds ; but always, in the main, going quick and precipitous, down towards the valley of Bahr Lout, the Sea of Lot. The aspects of the country are changing every moment under our eyes. It is not merely that as we advance into the wilderness the land becomes more and more bleak, and parched, and stony ; that there are fewer gardens and shepherds ; that the watchmen cease their patrol ; that the tracks disappear. The very trees and shrubs are in a few hours not the same trees and shrubs as those in our rear. On the western slope of these hills we found a homely and familiar vegetation, mixed with the flora of a more generous clime. In the valleys about Ain Karim, where John is said to have been born, we saw the dwarf oak, the bramble, the rock-rose, the

arbutus, growing in the same soil with the fig, the olive, the carob, and the vine. On the high ridge which links Jerusalem to Hebron, plants known to our English woods and fields cease altogether. Beyond this ridge, oak, bramble, rock-rose, and arbutus will not grow. The line of separation is sharp and straight; for these plants bloom up to the gates of Jerusalem, and there stop, like an army on a march. Not one of the plants just named, it is said, has been found on either Scopas or Olivet. The olive is seen for about an hour's ride further east; also the carob, and the lentisk; but these plants nearly cease on a line which may be drawn through Bethany and Beit Sâhûr. Even among herbs, rue, tamarisk, and *planta genista* are almost the only familiar names. The wilderness of Judea, so far as it possesses any flora, has a flora of its own. *Salsolas*, *fagonias*, *zizyphus*, *alhagi*, and *artemisia* find a parched and precarious life among the rocks and stones, and in the shady river beds.

A sudden picture on the hill-side in our front—a group of camels standing near a well, with a herd of goats and black cattle, a woman drawing water for them, three or four swarthy and naked children running and shouting among the flock, some asses tugging at the dry herbage—this desert picture causes me to draw the rein and gaze.

A well is the centre of nearly all that is sweetest in the poetry of Syrian life. It is the spot for which you long in the heat of noon; near which you spread your canvas at the close of day. In the dreary waste, it offers you a picture, often a drama. It is wedded to the ideas of woman and of love; for how can you forget that at the well of Haraun, Rebekah gave drink to Eliezar, the servant of Abraham, and was chosen by him to be Isaac's wife; that at the same well of Haraun, Jacob rolled away the stone for Rachel, and having watered her sheep, kissed her and loved her; that at the well of Midian, Moses drove away the shepherds and assisted Zippora and her six sisters to draw water for the herd; that at the well of Nazareth, Mary filled her pitcher; that at the well of Sychar, JESUS spoke

to the woman of Samaria, surprising her by begging a drink of water from one of an unfriendly sect.

As I sit gazing for an instant on the woman, the camels, and the flock, a wild cry, followed by an explosive crack, comes over a broad ravine on our left; but I no more dream of mischief in such a sound, than one feels on hearing a bird-piece in an English lane. Yakoub takes up the shout with a wiser ear: "Master, Master, come along; you stop, Taámra think you afraid; you ride fast, Taámra fire. Come along—slow." No enemy is in sight: no living thing, except the pastoral group in front—the flock, the camels, the children, and the young Arab woman at the well. But as we drop down the glen into the Wady Alya, we get sight of a new set of objects—the black covers of a Bedaween camp; an old man smoking at the door of his tent; several young men running and shouting; and in front of these, a tall fellow loading a carbine, which he jauntily lifts and fires. A figure on the left is rapidly descending the ravine, along the opposite edge of which we are moving towards the east. We have no reason either to fear the gun or to return the fire; for the dip between the two slopes is a mile in width, and we have long ago learned to smile at the range of these Syrian toys.

Still, it is a sombre sort of joke to be fired into by Arabs, even at a long range; and as every step is carrying us deeper into our neighbours' lair, we begin to think it would be well for our sheikhs to appear in sight. Why have these shots been fired? Are they meant to repel intrusion on their land, or only to warn us from using the water of their well? Ishmael and Saïd take the latter view, which is afterwards confirmed by our Bedaween sheikhs.

In Palestine, water is life, and the laws which regulate springs and wells are stern. A well is a work of labour; of labour and art combined; the limestone rock through which it is sunk being hard, and the shaft having sometimes to be pierced a hundred, nay, a hundred and fifty feet. None but the rich and mighty can afford the cost of boring

thus deep into the earth. The most famous princes have been makers of wells and pools, of aqueducts and tanks ; Abraham and Solomon among the Hebrews ; Haroun and Saladin among the Arabs ; the Mohammedan rajahs of India, the Moorish caliphs in Spain. To drill a hole into the rock is an act of piety and grace, as well as of power ; and the Arab saying is, that the water-provider will be always blest, being daily remembered by the faithful in their hour of prayer. Some springs and wells have names in history, like towns and hills—to wit, Beer-sheba, the well of oaths ; Beer-elim, the well of heroes. Marah, the well of bitter waters, Esek, the well of strife, Sitnah, the well of accusation, are also famous names. Jacob's well near Sychar, Joseph's well near Safed, Moses' well near Suez, are known with more certainty than half our sacred sites.

By a Syrian custom, older than the oldest law, a well belongs to the man who makes it, and after he is gone, it belongs for ever to his family and his tribe. No lapse of time is held to disturb this sacred right. The pastures of a country-side may be free to all, but the waters of a well are the sacred property of one. To fill up a well is an act of invasion, a challenge to the tribe who own it, a summons of the people to repel force by force. When the Philistines threw earth and stones into Abraham's wells, they meant to efface the witnesses to his having a property in the plain. When Isaac returned with his flock to Gerar, the herdsmen of Sharon fought with his servants about the water rights, not about his consumption of herbs and grain. The lord of the water is lord of the land. A well is evidence of the owner's property in the soil ; a landmark and a sign which cannot be gainsaid. No bond, no covenant, will in Palestine either last so long, or acquire so wide a fame. A stone may fall ; a pillar may be stolen ; but a shaft cut down into the solid rock can hardly ever be destroyed. Seventeen hundred years after Jacob bought the field and dug the well in Samaria, the woman of Sychar, in her con-

versation with our Lord, appealed to it in her argument against the Jews; and only the other day, at a distance of eighteen hundred years from that memorable noontide talk, we pilgrims from the far West stood beside that well near Sychar, finding the curb stones gone, much of the shaft filled up, the outer walls broken and heaped, yet the hollow still damp, though the season is very dry, as if water would flow at a mere tap of the earth.

While guarding his right over the spring, a Syrian never refuses to share his last drop of water with his brother man. The well is his own, for his own use, and for that of his house; but the water is a gift of God, which every man and woman is free to share. But the Arab draws a line. He will give drink to the stranger, though he may deny it to the stranger's beast. When the supply runs short, as in the fall before rain, the camel and the horse, as we had found at Bab el Wady, may be sent from the troughs parched and maddened with thirst. Are the hills in the Wady Alya less dry than the plains of Sharon? Have the Taámra of the wilderness more water to give, than the fellahs of Latrûn have to sell?

No doubt the Taámra, fearing that their supplies may fail, would give us to understand by these shots that our troop of horses and mules must not take water from their well.

A Taámra claims not only an exclusive right over the few springs of this dry district, but pretends to have an exclusive knowledge of their whereabouts. These little reservoirs of moisture in the wilderness are his best defence against the invasion of regular troops, and the Bedaween knows how to hide them with elaborate art.

A young Frank was one day chatting with the seraskier about these desert tribes, and between two puffs of his chibouque delivered himself of an opinion that a regiment of English rifles and a company of London police would in two months purge all the wadies round Jerusalem from this black pestilence of tents. The grave Oriental smiled, and

for a moment the wide-awake and the turban dipped towards each other over the pipe of peace. In the lilac cloud which rose and curled before the Frank, a picture grew into shape :—scene, a wild hilly country in the Abruzzi ; figures, a captain in green dress and dark feathers, leading on men, agile as panthers, armed to the teeth, and of a courage and endurance equal to their speed ; action, the failing chase of a ragged bandit, ill-fed, ill-armed, who had his home in the forest. And looking into this familiar picture, the Saxon also smiled. “The problem,” said the seraskier, laying down his pipe, “is how to follow the Bedaween in their flight. They ride upon good mares. They know the wells. A mounted troop must carry food, must count on finding water. The sun is fierce, and there is neither tree for shade nor town for rest. When the Bedaween find themselves pressed by an enemy, they stop the wells.”

This power of stopping the well has always been the Syrian's best defence. When the Assyrians were preparing to invade Judah, how did Hezekiah meet them? He fought against the Assyrians as the Taámra would now fight against the Turks, by concealing the wells.

As the sun sinks at our back, the absence of Mohammed and Abdallah gives an opportunity for gloomy thoughts, of which we try to seize advantage. Night is coming on. Every stride may be taking us further into a snare. A fox starts in our path, a vulture broods on a crag and disdains to fly. The yelp of a jackal comes from a cave. On a high tell we catch the figure of an Arab, erect, a carbine in his hand. From many trifling signs we note that the Taámra are about us, near, though unseen. By all poetic rules we ought to be cowed and silent, eager and alert ; but there seems to be in the air, in the saddle, in the darkness, a spring of animal joy and daring which wakes the spirit like a rouse of wine, like a plunge into the sea. All our best efforts to feel hushed and tragic fail. We hum snatches of old tunes, and exchange repartees and tales ; and when in the pause of an Arab song we catch the voices

of our Arikât sheikhs in the wady far below us, we hail them with a laughing protest that they have only met us to spoil our fun.

It is nearly dark when we reach the towers of Mar Saba, a Greek convent built in the Cedron gorge, midway from Zion to Bahr Lout, in perhaps the very wildest spot on the earth's surface; appealing all the more to the imagination from the close proximity of a Christian chapel and a Bedaween camp.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

THIS convent of Mar Saba—we should write it Saint Saba—was founded in the fifth century by a Syrian monk, of wondrous piety, singular taste, and some literary fame. This member of the Greek church composed the *Typicus*, a book of prayer which all the religious bodies in Judea adopted as their own. Having wandered on foot through the wildest gorges and deserts of Palestine in search of some spot more savage and sacred than all the rest, in which he might serve his Maker and lay his unworthy bones, he found what he had long sought in this ravine of the Wady Cedron. Nature had torn a cleft in the hill-side; bare rocks glowed white and hot in the sun; a little wild herbage grew in inaccessible nooks; the wilderness howled around him; and the Dead Sea simmered in the valley down below. The wolf, the lion, and the vulture were his only neighbours. Lying in the Cedron glen, with Essene farms not distant, this cleft had already the charm and the reputation of a holy place. On the walls of the glen were a number of natural caves, like those which abound higher up in the hills near Bethlehem and the Mount of Paradise; and on climbing to one of these caves, and peering into its mouth, the saint beheld a lion crouching in his lair. Bidding the savage beast depart, and being instantly obeyed, Saba felt that this lion's den was the proper place for him to choose; so, entering into possession of his estate, he made

the lion's bed in the rock his home. Tapping the ground for water, a spring leapt forth at his feet ; a spring of soft, sweet water, which flows, in proof of the miracle, to this very day, under the convent wall. Many anchorites are said to have gathered round the saint, that they might live in the odour of his sanctity ; some had probably been there before his arrival ; for we are told that when Saba died in yon den up the rocky stairs, he left a population in this desolate ravine, and on the stony heights above it, equal to that of Jerusalem in the present day.

Some members of the Jewish schools—Essenes and Pharisees—were residents here in the reign of Herod the Great ; the place having all the best qualities which the sterner Jews, of whatever rite, would desire in one of their holy retreats. It was not far from Jerusalem, the Temple of which could be seen from a neighbouring height. It was a lonely spot, having nothing in its soil and climate to attract either the Arab robber or the Roman lord. It was too dry to admit of fields and gardens, too hot to allow of a luxurious life. Yet there was some little moisture for man and beast, and a patch of mould on the rocks here and there enabled the anchorites to grow a mouthful of lentils and barley. Of one such recluse from the world we get a parting peep in a Jewish scribe. Banus, a Pharisee of the hardest rule, was a man who dwelt in a cave, who wore a shirt of leaves, who ate no other food than herbs and roots of the desert, who soused his body in cold water day and night, to render himself clean and chaste. Banus drew to his cave the young men of rank and credit from Jerusalem. Josephus, the historian, is said to have lived with him in the desert for upwards of three years.

His cell may have been at this present Mar Saba ; for a cave, and a spring, and a savage nook, were all here ready to his hand, within three hours' ride of the Bethlehem gate.

Some part of the same glen was probably the abode of John the Baptist, cousin of our Lord.

Of John's early life, before he went down to the Jordan

ford in his camel's-hair shirt, and began to call in a loud voice on the Jews to repent of their sins and be baptized, we have only a glimpse. He is said in the Syrian legends to have been born at Ain Karim, a pretty and verdant spot in the hills, about five miles west of Jerusalem. Some say he was born at Jutta, a town or hamlet six or seven miles to the south of Hebron. Either way, his family was of saintly race ; his father Zachariah being a priest of the Temple, his mother Elizabeth a daughter of the house of Aaron, and a kinswoman of the Virgin Mary. From his birth John had been vowed, like Samson and Samuel, to live as a Nazarite ; that is to say, he had been pledged—just as a baby in Sicily and Andalusia may be pledged to the convent—to the observance of certain ancient and ascetic rites : to drink no wine, to eat no grapes, to abstain from fermented juices and from dainty food, to pass no comb through his beard, to use no razor on his head, to dress in the coarsest garb, to indulge in no warm baths, to touch no dead body, not even that of either father or mother, wife or child. Thus, from his birth upwards, he was a holy man, set apart for the service of God.

At an early period of his life he retired, like Banus, into the wilderness ; which, whether his home were at Jutta or Ain Karim, lay near at hand ; retiring from the sight of Jewish corruption, of Grecian luxury, and of Roman might. The Zion from which he fled was that city of Herod and Pilate which the new palaces, theatres, and baths, the soldiers, ensigns, eagles, and inscriptions, had transformed into something more like Athens and Antioch than the city in which David dwelt ; a change unbearable to a pious Jew, who counted the subtleties of Greek art as so many abominations in the sight of God. Going out into the wild country, John put away the robe of his family and his order, to don the garb which had been worn by Elijah and the prophets ; a sack of camel's-hair cloth, caught in at the waist by a leathern zone ; the dress still worn by the children of Abu Dis. It was the habit of all the holy men of old, from

the days of Elijah, the man of God, who stood before Ahab and his Sidonian queen, clothed in his shaggy locks, his shirt and girdle, and his mantle of sheep-skin. For the ancient prophets, like the more recent Essenes, setting their faces against crowded streets, and warning their countrymen how much their virtues had decayed in towns, exhorted them, even more by dress and picture than by words, to appease the wrath of God by returning to the simplicities of Arab life. "To your tents, O Israel!" had been the cry of reformers in every age.

All the great teachers had practised what they taught. Moses retired from the people into Mount Sinai. Elijah lived apart from the world at Cherith. Some sort of retreat, accompanied by prayer and fasting, was the needful preparation for a holy and active life.

John followed in the wake of Elijah, JESUS in the wake of John.

To his cave in this desert wady, John drew multitudes of people from Jerusalem, Jericho, and the cities of Judah and Samaria. Many Jews were inclined to believe that the Shiloh whom they expected had come in John. His voice, his garb, his unshaven crown, his abstinence from wine and grapes, his fiery eloquence, calling on the people to repent and live, inflamed the imaginations of a suffering, superstitious, and expectant race. Some said he was Elijah come again. For the Jews, in exercising a poetical instinct which is the common spoil of conquered yet unbroken races, dreamed that Elijah, the most popular figure in their history, would come to life again; just as our ancient Britons expected Arthur to revive, and the modern Portuguese imagined Sebastian would awake.

Among the men who came to see and question John, hoping that he would prove to be their Messiah, were a knot of young friends from the lake country of Galilee; very strict Jews; enthusiasts for their creed and race. Two of these young men were brothers, Andrew and Simon, sons of Jona of Capernaum. The third young man was John,

son of Zebedee, also of Capernaum. Jona and Zebedee were boatmen and fishermen on the lake ; men doing well in the world ; having boats of their own, and hiring servants to cast out their nets. Old neighbours in Capernaum, and partners in their humble craft, they had seen their sons grow up as companions from the cradle, playing on the beach, handling the tackle, sitting in the same synagogue, until they were young men. These youths had listened to the same Galilean preachers ; they talked with each other about the Messiah and the holy war, and went up to Passover in the same caravan. As the caravan in which they travelled came down to Bethabara, they would hear of John the Baptist ; and being full of hope for a priest and king who could drive out the stranger and restore David's kingdom, they attached themselves to his side, receiving baptism at his hands, and expecting every day that he would declare himself the Son of God.

John told his eager audience that he was not Elias come again ; that he was not the Messiah whom they sought ; that he was but a man who had been chosen to announce God's coming, and prepare His way. The Deliverer, then, had not yet come ; a needful warning to declare ; since the two martial sects of the Herodians and the Galileans taught that the Lord had already lived and died. John told his people that the true Christ was still to come ; that he would come soon ; the kingdom of heaven being nigh at hand.

He said the kingdom of heaven, not that of the earth. These were strange tidings for a Jew to preach and for the Jews to hear. For neither in Samaria nor in Judea was any other kind of Saviour expected than a mighty prince, one who should prove himself greater than Herod, happier than Judas. If every heart was inflamed with the desire of change, that change was understood to be one of politics and state, beginning in a new Revolt of Modin, passing through fire and blood to empire, closing in a defeat of Cæsar, a destruction of the Greek cities, an expulsion of strangers from the land, and a personal reign of the Christ

on earth. A Jew found it very hard to conceive of a mighty change that should be personal only—an inward, not a visible revolution. John proclaimed this startling fact, that the coming change was to be one effected in the spirit of man.

But more than this germ of a new gospel lay in the words he uttered. He called upon the people to repent and be baptized. Repent of what? Were they not the chosen race? Had they not Abraham for their father? Why, too, should they go down into the Jordan and be baptized? Baptism was a rite performed upon an alien, not upon a Jew. The Greek, the Syrian, the Ethiopian, needed baptism; and such an ordinance for strangers who had joined their church they could understand. But a Jew was a man born into the true church. If they were sons of Moses, how could they require this outward sign?

The truth was, they were not sons of Moses; they had forgotten his teaching, and replaced his law. The people had suffered a vital loss, of which they appeared to be unaware. They had separated themselves from their ancient faith. And this was not only the truth, but the key to nearly all other truths.

CHAPTER XXV.

JEWISH PARTIES.

WHEN John began to preach, the Jews proper—excluding Samaritans and Galileans—were divided into the three great bodies of Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes. Most of the Sadducees were men of birth and rank ; princes of the royal house, sons of high priests, heads of great houses, and their kin. Annas was a Sadducee. As a rule, all the old families, and most of the rich families, belonged to this aristocratic school.

There was something nobler in the Sadducees than their noble blood, though their virtues had already gone much to seed, and many among them seemed to have no higher aim in life than that of making the Law of Moses a means of advancement in Cæsar's court. Their masters had taught them that virtue is its own reward, and that a good man will do what is right because it is right, without being spurred into his duty by hope and fear. But they drew from this doctrine a conclusion which is not in the premiss : —that the lure of enjoyment and the threat of pain were pious frauds, strong enough to impose on carpenters and goatherds, but unworthy to enslave a scholar's mind. They showed a genius for Hellenic poetry and art, and found much to admire in Egypt and in Rome. But, then, they were too proud to render their acquirements useful to the land which they governed, and a people whom they despised.

Rich, accomplished, high in station, the Sadducees could defy public opinion, and laugh at the pretensions of more humble priests. A fellow in rags, dropping on his knee to a rabbi little richer than himself, was a favourite jest with them; as was also the notion of a tailor going up into the Temple and paying half a shekel to a priest for the redemption of his soul. They said the fellow had no soul to save, and they knew the priest had no salvation to sell. In their daily lives they were easy and quiet; free from zeal; indifferent to applause; blind to all wrongs of their race; affable to strangers; inclined to pleasure, yet staid and decorous in their outward mien; careless of affairs so long as the streets were quiet, and nobody disputed their rank and place. Filling many great offices in the Temple and the city, it was their duty, not less than their desire, to stand firmly by the two great powers of Cæsar and of God.

As to their articles of faith—the faith which they held in private—these noble Sadducees, rejecting the idea that a man should do right from so base a motive as either greed or terror, put their trust in the Mosaic Law and in that law only; casting from them as so much priestly rubbish, all traditions and additions; all theories, commentaries, secret doctrines, mystical rubrics and interpretations; all rites and ceremonies, all extensions and developments, which they could not find in the language of their sacred books. A doctrine not found in the Pentateuch they refused to admit on any one's word. Thus, they refused to believe in a resurrection and an after life. Nothing being said of a soul of man, of an existence after death, by Moses, they put that doctrine down as an invention; a bit of police, clever in its way; being at one and the same time a consolation to the poor and a profit to the rich. But such an invention was, in their opinion, good only for the mob, not for scholars and princes. On the contrary side, they taught their sons that the soul dies with the body; that God has no concern with the affairs of men; that the human will is free; and that man is either good or evil by his own election.

All Jews believed in some sort that the Lord is with his people in the flesh; with them in the synagogue and the lonely place, at seed-time and harvest, in the chamber and on the march; blessing their obedience to his will by fruitful fields, abounding herds, health, triumph in war, beautiful captives, love, respect, the high seats of the table—more than all other gifts by length of days and homes full of sons and grandsons. But these Sadducees taught that God's promise to be with his people ends at the tomb. Their God was a God of the earth, of which it was their happiness and their virtue to possess a magnificent share. They laughed at all fables of a life beyond the grave; deriding the notion of angels and spirits; the sole heaven of which they had any knowledge being about them, in the palaces of Zion, in the gardens of Ophel, in the fountains of Siloam.

Hence, though a Sadducee might send a kid to the altar and a shekel to the priest, in deference to usage, as Socrates sacrificed a fowl to the gods in whom he put no trust, he offered no private prayers and supplications to Heaven. A garden of palms and olives, of grapes and figs, made the paradise of his heart. Content with his lot on earth, having no hope of heaven and no fear of hell, this learned and refined voluptuary was satisfied to eat and drink, to maintain the peace, and to despise the mob. Men of his easy faith may be found in every country and in every clime. To wear soft raiment next the skin, to eat from golden platters, to dwell in sumptuous mansions, to marry lovely wives, to be served by clouds of servants, to enjoy rank and precedence among men, are strong temptations to the soul. A man may delight in such things without sin; yet men who would rather be rich than free, happy than good, are not the heroes who will rouse their country from that torpor which commences in excess and ends in death. These Sadducees—in other words the party of Nobles, the friends of Annas—supported Pilate, and lent no countenance to the policy of revolt.

The Pharisees, the second party in point of age, the first in strength of numbers, were a body of men professing to be set apart, selected from the mass. A Pharisee was one of the saints ; one of those for whom the earth was made ; a special object of Almighty care. These Separatists believed that it was only for a time, and only for their good, that God was ruling them by a Roman sword. A little while, and they would chase these legions into the sea. The Lord had promised them this deliverance from of old, written it down in their sacred books. They were always quoting this great Charter, always expecting a Deliverer to arrive.

In the sense which the Separatists put on the word patriot, they were patriots in the first degree ; men to whom the Roman yoke was odious, and liberty sweeter than love and life.

To be ready was their motto. Either soon or late they knew that a Deliverer must come ; every eye was straining for him, every heart yearning towards him ; and on his coming they believed that the kingdom of the stranger would melt away, and Christ would reign over his saints for a thousand years. That God was angry with them for their sins, they could well conceive ; evidence of the divine wrath being visible on every side of them ; in the dominion of Cæsar, in the prosperity of Samaria, in the corruption of their high priests, in the erection of heathen temples, in the popularity of Ionic arts. But they told each other that God could not be angry with His own for ever. As He had remembered them in Egypt and in Babylon, so would He remember them once again. The night of their trial had been long, but surely the dawn was about to break. They must be ready. It was a patriot's duty to get his house in order, to scour his shield, to sharpen his lance. When the blast of the Deliverer sounded, it should not find his sword rusting in its scabbard, the cord of his bow broken, the edge of his battle-axe bent.

Dreaming of a revolt like that of Modin, of an onset like

that of Adasa, the younger Pharisees passed their days in watching events, in exciting the people, in preparing for war. Unlike the luxurious Sadducees, they loved their country and religion better than their lives. In every street riot, in every temple uproar, they had a part. They yelled after Pilate's banner, they urged the Galileans to revolt. As no man could tell when the day of deliverance might arrive, they held it a sacred duty to be present in every fray, never shrinking from a brush with the soldiers and magistrates of Rome. Who should say? In one of these street riots, the trumpets of celestial warriors might be heard, and the Lord of Hosts might descend in their front with his flaming sword.

In their religious creed, the Pharisees held a ground of their own; deriving their theory from the Oral Law, and putting as its foundation an idea in which the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai found themselves agreed. This idea was that God acts on man through temperament, so that his nature and his will are one; a doctrine which enabled them to teach that a man's deeds and misdeeds are his own, not God's, although God may foreknow when a child is born every act which he will commit between birth and death.

The Pharisees believed in an after life; in a resurrection of the body; in a scale of rewards for the good and punishments for the bad. Being told by the Sadducees that no such theories could be found in their sacred books, they answered that they derived them from the Oral Law, which all the colleges and schools in Israel then taught as of equal authority with the Mosaic text.

Like the zealots of every creed and nation, some of the Pharisees made a public display of their opinions and of their hopes; walking the streets with affected gait; their heads inclined to the earth, their eyes half-closed, their thin lips moving as if in prayer. They took the high seats in their synagogues; they kept the great festivals with ostentatious zeal; they called on men to witness how strict

they were ; they placed on their brows those frontlets of parchment called phylacteries, on which they inscribed a number of Scripture texts ; wearing them not only when they entered the synagogue, and during the hours of prayer, but while they stood in the public street, and when they sat down privately at meat. By this addition to their dress they meant to say that they were consecrated priests, that every act of their lives was holy, and that every moment of the day was given by them to God.

A Jew wore a red stripe on his mantle to distinguish him at sight from an Arab and a Greek ; a difference of tribe being always denoted in Palestine by a difference in the garb. To excite more comment, a Pharisee wore this red stripe very broad, making of it what an Irish Celt makes of his green ribbon, a pious and a seditious badge. As he soared in devotion, or sank in despair, he increased the phylacteries on his brow and broadened the red band on his cloak. For with him, worship was a public act ; and he rent his clothes instead of rending his heart. His virtue was impatience, his religion hate. In every movement of his body he wished it to be understood that he was throwing down a challenge to the magistrates of Rome.

Yet many good men, and not a few learned men, were Pharisees. Of this sect was Josephus the historian. Abtalion, Hillel, Shammai, Simeon, Jonathan ben Uziel were Pharisees. Gamaliel was a Pharisee, and Paul was educated in the school of the Pharisees.

The Essenes, youngest and meekest of the three great parties, were a protest of nature against the easy unbelief of certain priests and princes of the church. They ran into a wild extreme of faith. But, like the Sadducees, they took no part in street politics, dreamt of no Messiah, and strongly opposed the theory of revolt.

In place of teaching that God has abandoned his children to the government of their own vices, the Essenes taught that Heaven is present in every act performed by every human creature, and that so closely that a man is

neither good nor evil in himself, but only in so far as may be given to him by the grace and ordinance of God. In place of saying that the ends of life are to feast and marry, to govern and grow rich, to take in turn your pleasure and revenge, they said, by word and deed, that a righteous man should feed on coarse fare, that he would do well to keep single, that he ought to exercise no authority over his fellows, and that when he had weaned his flesh from the world, and become one of the elect, he should sell his lands, and throw all his substance into the common fund.

The Essenes preached the immortality of the soul, the duty and blessedness of prayer, the merit of submission to God.

Putting away from them everything which most of the Jews prized so highly—courts, attendance, titles, palaces, gardens, hareems, even books and study, art and music—many of these pious men retired into the desert wadies, where they made it a part of their holy rite to till the soil, to rear bees and birds, to tend sheep and goats, to train vines, grow pulse and corn, wear camel's-hair garments, and to live in their own persons a chaste and homely life. Their aim was to be good for the sake of goodness, and neither to seek nor to accept a recompense for virtue. They strove to be always holy in thought and pure in heart.

As to the outward facts of his life, an Essene was more than half a monk, but a monk of the most simple and least earthly type. He was bound to dwell apart from the world; to own neither money nor land, to enjoy no solace of wife and child, to labour for the bread which he ate, to dress in coarse cloth, to rise with the sun, and to fast from food on the Sabbath day.

In his views and in his habits there was an underlying lode of virtue. An Essene swore no oath. He taught the sinfulness of war, even when war was waged in defence. He held the sacred gospel that under no confusion of right and wrong was a man to be made a slave.

Like the Sadducees, the Essenes were few in number, as a celibate order must always be ; but they were of singular power for so small a sect. They nursed the sick and fed the poor. They set a high example of purity and chastity, virtues which, when voluntary, excite a strange respect in the minds of an Oriental crowd. In the midst of much moral corruption and a great spiritual blight, they helped to keep alive in Jewry some knowledge of the noblest truths.

The chief seats of this sect were pitched on the western shores of the Dead Sea, about the present Ras el Feshka, and along the slopes of the wilderness by Mar Saba and Ain Jidy. Some of them dwelt in the villages below Bethlehem. One of the gates of Jerusalem bore their name. Taking no part in affairs, the Essenes gave no trouble to the ruling powers, and their doctrine of obedience was a support to the actual prince. For if an Essene lent no active force to the government, he held that revolt was unlawful ; not because the prince was doing right, but because revolt was contrary to the law of love. An Essene could not tolerate strife, and least of all strife in a holy cause. No pupil of his school was allowed to make a sword, a spear, or any other weapon by which man could be slain.

Herod the Great had given his favour to these harmless breeders of bees and birds, and Menachem, one of their chiefs, had exercised a merciful influence in the tyrant's court.

Menachem was a Jewish William Penn.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DEAD SEA

RESTING for the night at Mar Saba, in the wady Cedron, near the seats of these Essenes and Pharisees of old, we spring to our feet as the clocks chime twelve, souse our heads in a dish of water, like Banus and Menachem, swallow from the hands of Brother Demetrius a glass of raki, smoke a cheroot on the stone terrace, near the lion's cave, and leap into the saddle by two o'clock. No moon is out; but the stars are raining showers of glory into the wild abyss; touching the yellow rocks, the isolated towers, the Gothic chapel, the massive walls and flanks with a lustrous and a sombre spirit. Outside the iron gate, which no Bedaween and no woman is allowed to pass, and which no man may enter without an order from the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem; on the broad stone ramp, sit our Arab sheikhs, Mohammed and Abdallah, on their slim little mares; lithe fellows, dark-eyed, fierce, their hands grasping long Arab spears, their belts full of handsome old pistols, useless in a skirmish, but invaluable in a rack. Yakoub, our Maronite guide, and Saïd, the Nubian muleteer, are packing the baggage, and roping it to the mule. Ishmael is jingling his pouch of piastres and putting the charcoal fire to my second cheroot. Demetrius, the holy brother who had served us with raki and shown us the skulls of six hundred saints, all monks of Mar Saba, stands by with his lantern,

keeping an eye on the Bedaween sheikhs, and murmuring softly of backshish; while a band of his fellow monks are chanting lauds in a chapel hung round with lamps, and the chime of the convent bell goes booming in silvery thunder down the glen.

For five hours after quitting Mar Saba we see neither house nor man, though we start many a wild fox and vulture, and pass by many a dead camel and ass. This is the district given by tradition to the Forty Days. In a dry well, we find a leopard, which falling into the hole, has died for lack of prey. It is just the kind of pit into which Reuben might have cast his brother Joseph; deep, but without water, and lying near the highway of travel through the wilderness.

Ere we drop down from the hills of Judah into the ghôr or plain, the sun has got up high in heaven; and as we gaze into the valley below, the blue and shining waters of the Bahr Lout appear to our blinking eyes more lovely than the tenderest of Italian lakes when seen from the Alpine tops. How long those tantalizing waters are in sight! Sinking from dip to dip, we come upon a wide and broken terrace of fine mould, mixed with chalk, which from the heights above had seemed to be the natural bed or level of the plain. But when we reach this terrace, it is found to be only the first and broadest of successive levels. We fall to a second, then to a third smooth table of alluvial soil. These stairs by which you descend from the lowest range of hills to the ghôr, the true level of the Dead Sea, have a common character, produced no doubt by a common cause. They have all been under water. Where they have not been worn and furrowed, their smoothness is like that of a sandy beach. They are lapped by ancient shore lines, ribbed by ancient waves. Near the lake end of the river bed the plain is dotted with a multitude of cones or tells, about fifty feet high, their crowns level with each other, and their sides smooth and round as the ebb and flow of water will wear a platform of marl and clay. These cones are

so regular in shape as to resemble works of art ; the tombs of sheikhs in times when men were giants, with natural pyramids for graves.

At some remote period of the earth's history, the great hollow of the Jordan has been full of water, and the terraces of chalk and sand, of gypsite, chert, and tufa, have been formed by the sudden and successive lowerings of a mighty inland sea.

By the Am el Feshka, a saline spring in the ancient territories of the Essenes, we ride into a brake, or forest of canes, oleanders, agnus cacti, and prickly shrubs ; ride into it in line, Mohammed in advance, Saïd with the baggage-mule in our midst, Abdallah in our rear ; for this forest of spines and brambles, being the only bit of green cover on the plain, is a lurking-place for the Abu n' Sair, and for all the men of marauding and unfriendly tribes. A party of red men on a war-trail could not move with a more measured step than we use in passing through this brake. Mohammed feels the way. Every voice is hushed, and every ear is open. A dozen times we halt among the thorns, while Mohammed rides to the front, or Ishmael swings himself into a neighbouring tree. A long, thin wail brings back no echo and no answer. With ears alert, with hands on our tabanjas (as these Bedaween call revolvers), we proceed ; the two sheikhs holding many a parley between their teeth, in which the words are few, but the glances quick and bright. They know that we are treading on unsafe ground ; not on account of the Ehtaimât and the Abu n' Sair, two bastard tribes of no great strength, who prowl among the ruins of Jericho, and about the pastures of Wady Kelt, but because the whole desert has been roused by Akeel Aga, and the disposition of the Adouan, the warlike tribe immediately in our front, but beyond the Jordan, is quite unknown. In common times they are tame enough. A fee they want, and a little bread and jebilé they expect ; but a dish of tea pleases them, a charge of gunpowder wins their hearts. In times of strife, when their Salhaan neigh-

bours are in motion, these Adouan are very uncertain friends to the Frank.

Emerging from the canes and tamarisks on to the sea-shore, we catch sight of a man, the first whom we have seen since saying good-bye to Demetrius in the convent-gate. He is standing on the nearest cone or hillock, his face being towards us, one hand shading his eyes, the other hand grasping an Arab lance. Mohammed, calling to his cousin, pricks forward for the cone, while the rest of our party, led by Abdallah, jerk their way through the burning pebbles towards a little islet, where, the Bedaween tells us, we may enjoy an easy and refreshing plunge into the brine. In ten minutes our young sheikh returns with but slender news, not having caught his man. He thinks the fellow was a scout for the Adouan, or some other predatory horde ; but he guesses, from a hundred signs invisible to a Frank, that no large party of Bedaween has lately passed the ford. So far, the ghôr seems safe. Yet, as both the Beni Sakkr and the Adouan are known to be roving and restless, it is likely that a camp of Bedaween may exist near the Jordan, on the Moab bank, from which peril may leap on us at any moment of either day or night. So Mohammed, though he says nothing, looks as if he meant to keep watch and guard over this perilous plain.

Sending Ishmael on as a scout, placing Saïd near the shore with the mule, and posting Abdallah in our rear towards the brake, he slips into the water for an instant, throws on his sack and girdle, and rides off into position, while the Saxon is slowly pulling off his boots.

It is a strange and memorable scene. High mountains to the east and to the west ; the heights of Abraham, the crests of Gilead, the Mountain of the Temptation ; on our right hand the burnt cities of Lot ; on our left hand the ruins of Gilgal and Jericho ; in our front the long flat plain of sand and ashes, the green fringe of the sacred stream, and slanting across that river the Great Ford over which Joshua passed, and on which JESUS was baptized by John. Not a

cloud flecks the sky, not a breath stirs the air, not a ripple moves the lake. No voice of bird, no hum of insect, breaks the oppressive hush. Pitiless streams the light upon these blinding sands. Here and there, along the shore, lie stems and boles of trees; old giants, torn by floods from the Jordan banks, dashed down into the Sea of Salt, tossed back in storms from its angry clutch, steeped thick with brine, and left to peel and whiten. As we strip to bathe, two vultures, gnawing at a dead camel, scream and soar into the air, wheel, cry, and sink upon one of these skeleton trunks; fixing their fiery eyes on a vision of white flesh, and never slackening that vampire gaze so long as we splash and plunge round the rocky isle.

Some people call the Dead Sea noisome. This must be done in obedience to a monkish tale, invented by Greeks who never wash, and repeated by Italians who cannot swim. Now, bathing on the beach at Malaga is good, in the Nile at Gizeh delicious, in the cave at Capri superb; but in these, and all other waters level with the sea, there is an easy limit to the words which express enjoyment of the bath. The pleasure is human, and may be borne, like the flavour of a fine wine, the taste of a rich fruit, the zest of a quick ride. But a plunge into the Bahr Lout is an essay by itself. Either from the glowing light, from the fevered blood, or from the cooling brine, your first dive into the Dead Sea is not a common bath, but an experiment in the unknown animal delights of life.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE JORDAN.

OUR first impressions of the Great Ford, the Bethabara of St. John, a pathway of stones in the Jordan bed, near the site of Gilgal, lying at the foot of the high mountain of the Temptation, are brightened by a bit of comedy, shaded by a little trouble of our own; for in the shallow nook where John baptized his followers, we enjoy the frolic of a Bedaween attack; and near to the spot on which the multitude must have pitched their tents athwart the burning ghôr, my parched and docile Sabeah falls to the earth, smitten to her death by sunstroke,

How much your daily history of travel becomes a record of petty cares! The homely earth is about you everywhere, when you ride and walk, when you eat and sleep. Fleas pester you in the Alhambra, smells offend you in the Grand Canal. A man on a journey is always mortal; he may sprain his ankle on the Righi, drop a ring into Como, catch cold in the Catacombs. Let him turn as he lists, the miseries of life go with him, like the slaves who were paid to cry out against pride in the emperor's car. Your pony bolts on the plains of Troy, your tooth aches in Carmel, your boat founders in the Nile. In travel there can be no set scenes, no stage heroics, no speeches aside. The action is direct, the scenery is naked. An Arab steals your purse on the pyramid, a negro stones you from the Haram wall; and is it not well that you should see and feel all actual facts, so as to

shed in the quick light of truth all fancies and remembrances of places drawn from books ? The heat and dust, the drought and flood, watch and strife—the robber, the musquito, the hyena—are a part of the Holy Land, no less enduring than the orange grove, the vineyard, and the well. Take the sunset and the city filth together. The homely thorns and briers upon your path only serve to etch the picture of rock and road, of tree and fountain, deeper into your mind.

Crossing the ghôr from Bahr Lout to El Meshra, the heat above, the dust beneath, grow hot enough to madden either man or beast. Your feet are like burning coals ; your temples beat with pain ; your tongue swells and reddens ; blisters start upon your lips ; your eyes blink and close under this intolerable light. A man who has either walked or ambled through an Alpine gorge on a summer day, two or three thousand feet above the sea, among forests of oak and pine, among cascades and cataracts, with rain in the herbage every second day, and snow in the hollows ten months in the twelve, remembering what it is to be walled up for hours in an airless valley, even under so tame a fury as a Bernese sun, may fancy what it is to tread the sulphurous plain of the Dead Sea before it has been cooled by the autumnal floods. The ghôr lies a thousand miles to the south of Berne ; it has no thick forests of oak and pine ; for ten months in the year it feels no reviving rain ; since the age of Lot it has never been cooled by a fall of snow ; and instead of standing high above the sea, like the flat fields about Meyringen, about Martigny, it sinks down below it, no less than fifteen hundred feet beneath the tide in Jaffa roads. It has scarcely any verdure to cool the air ; it enjoys no shadows from an early hour ; and the face of the mountain chain which hangs above it is composed of a shining limestone rock.

Half-way between the lake and the ford, Sabeah, drooping into a walk, from which neither voice nor whip can rouse her, swerves and sinks. She utters no cry ; a slight shiver passes through her back ; a sigh, not a start ; and she reels

and drops into the white dust, as into a bed. Mohammed, riding at my side, and accustomed to these desert scenes, implores me to mount the Nubian's horse, push on with our party to the river, and get into shade and water as soon as we can reach the bank ; leaving Saïd behind to revive and bring on the mare. Glad enough to mount his horse, for the white ashes burn through the sides and soles of my English boots, as the hot sand of the Greeks is said to have crept through their folds of mail, I yet hesitate to leave my mare behind with this careless slave ; the same thing, apparently, as leaving her to the vultures and hyenas. She seems to be faint with thirst ; for the poor thing dipped her nose into the salt sea more than once, though merely to snatch it up with a shiver of disgust. Not having a drop of water in the jars, we moisten her lips with a bunch of grapes, and thrust a thick slice of melon between her teeth. Her jaws seem locked. We stroke her mane, and pat her nose, and talk to her like a child ; but she appears to be unable either to eat or move ; though her eyes are wide open, and her chest heaves heavily in sobs.

Saïd now takes her in hand. First he kicks her in the belly, then cuffs her about the head, until my blood begins to boil in my veins against him, and the whip is raised in my hand to strike. I refrain from hitting the brutal slave ; not because he would care for a blow, but on account of the humanities which Englishmen in their travels should always teach. Seeing my anger, the young sheikh springs to the ground, catches up a spine, and jobs it into the mare's nostril ; whence the blood coming thick and fast, she begins to shake and kick. Once upon her legs, Saïd mounts her, and rides her about three hundred yards, when she drops again. Again bled and raised, we push forward over the plain, until she falls a third time, and has to be a third time bled before we arrive at the Jordan bank.

There, to have done with her tale, poor beast, she was bathed and fired ; but the stroke which cast her down into the sand was mortal, and early on the following day she died.

As we near the river, Mohammed and Abdallah ride up to Yakoub, and hold with him a long and earnest palaver in our behalf ; the two sheikhs being of opinion that we ought not to pitch our tent near the Great Ford, since signs which they can read, but cannot make me understand, inform their keener eyes that enemies are near. They ask me, therefore, to snatch a hasty meal, to enjoy a plunge in the river, to pick a few pebbles from the shore, and then mounting our horses, hurry away to the Wady Kelt, cross over to Riha, and pitch our camp, for the day and night, near Ain es Sultan, the Grand Spring, where, if either the Adouan or the Beni Sakkr should appear in numbers, we may have the additional protection of a Turkish fort. Into this arrangement I refuse to fall. The Jordan is a capital point with me. In London I had dreamt of the Great Ford by which Joshua and his army passed from Moab into Canaan ; of the stream in which John immersed his disciples ; of the river bank along which JESUS walked ; and having come three thousand miles to see this place, to rest under these willows, to paddle in this flood, I resolutely demur to quitting it with a mere glimpse, let the Adouan and the Beni Sakkr do what they will. The scout, whom we saw near the cane wood, has not shown himself again. This may be a good sign or a bad sign. Mohammed says he may be following on our track, crawling through the furrows, hiding among the canes ; in which case he will have seen that we are lamed of a mare, and weak to that extent for either flight or fight. If he were a friend, he would not have run away ; if he were alone he would have been sure to come in and beg, like all his tribe. Yet, English flesh and blood are not to be driven from a post by unseen foes. To all remonstrance and expostulation I reply by slinging my belt to a tree and doffing my clothes for a swim. Mohammed argues the case, while Yakoub is pitching the tent and Saïd unpacking the mules ; but finding that he can make no impression on Yakoub, he turns to Abdallah ; and at last, by the time that Ishmael and myself are tumbling in the stream like dolphins,

the sheikhs appear to have fallen in with a humour which they have tried in vain to overcome.

The Jordan flows through a rent or fissure in the plain, some twenty or thirty feet below the level of the broad ancient river bed ; so that the fringe of reeds and canes, which makes the bank bright and cool, is invisible a few yards off. You are riding through a cloud of dust, hot ashes, and blinding sulphur ; a mountain wall in front and on your flanks ; not a tree, not a shrub, not a blade of grass in sight ; no more sign of vegetation round you than you would expect to see in a furnace ; when suddenly, with a start, like a stage trick, your feet are among wild plants and your shoulders pressing against green boughs. Much of this flora is new and strange. The olive and the vine have now disappeared. The fig is still found ; growing in this heat to an enormous size. The palm, though it is native to the soil, is nowhere to be seen ; nor do many of the plants which flourish in the Wady Kelt and round the springs of Riha, grow in this part of the Jordan bed. The soil is sown with salt. Hence the vegetation consists of salsolas, suædas, sea-pinks, with a few tamarisks and acacias, the *Populus Euphratica*, and a long line of reeds and thorns ; through the midst of which winds and eddies the sacred stream.

A sharp bend in its course has thrown up a bar of flint and chalk ; over which bar, the current being strong, the waters rush and foam. In fording the river, the Arabs have either to cling together in a line, or hold on to their horses' necks. At this point, say the Greeks, the twelve tribes passed over under Joshua, and the twelve chosen men took up the twelve stones from the river as a sign. Here also, say the same Greeks, John baptized the multitudes who came to him from Judea and from Galilee ; among others the Son of Man ; and thus it happens that the same ridge of limestone shingle was a witness of what may be called the first and the second birth of Israel ; the dawn of its career as a separate and conquering people, and the change of its old spiritual life into a system of faith and morals for all mankind.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE ADOUAN AND SALHAAN TRIBES.

SWIMMING across the stream to the Moab bank, wading back along the stony bar, picking up handfuls of white pebbles, ducking and darting through the currents, we spend an ecstatic hour ; when Yakoub, having enjoyed his bath and laid the luncheon under a tree, calls out that the repast is served. It is hard to leave such a stream, even to eat and drink ; but the coolness has brought on hunger ; so turning once more into the whirls for a last lave, we observe Mohammed crawl stealthily from the water, throw a shawl round his temples, and, naked from neck to feet, bound up the bank.

What does he see ? What does he mean ? I glance at the tree on which my tabanja hangs ; a weapon about which an Arab has a wild curiosity ; but instead of running to that tree, Mohammed catches his mare, vaults into his seat, and disappears suddenly behind the shrubs. Abdallah, too, half-dressed from his bath, darts at his lance and his little mare, and poising the one, and flinging himself across the other, leaps up the bank. What evil is abroad ? Before I can swim to the shore and question Yakoub, a sharp cry, like that which the sheikh had uttered in the brake near Ain el Feshka, is answered by a whoop from among the dense green bushes on the Moab side. Ishmael now comes running towards the bar, sounding an alarm ; and in less time than it takes to write the words, we are all out of the

water, huddling on our clothes, snatching down tabanjas, buckling on belts. A dozen Bedaween have by this time shown themselves among the reeds of the farther bank ; three or four of them mounted, the rest on foot, and all of them armed with either firelocks or spears. They belong, says Yakoub, not to the Adouan, who dwell in the Wady Hesban and the Wady Seir, but to the Salhaan, a tribe of Bedaween obeying a ferocious chief named Goblan, who, as he receives no part of the plunder drawn from pilgrims by the Adouan and their allies, is not likely to respect the passports of Abu Dis. Our safety must depend upon ourselves. But where are the sheikhs? These young men cannot have fled, one of them without his clothes? "No, no," cries Ishmael ; "they are near ; they are in the shrub ; they will soon come back." Meanwhile some of the Salhaan, crowding down to the ford, appear as if they meant to cross, when Yakoub opens a parley by asking them the news ; adding that he is travelling with a great English sheikh, that the English fire-ships are at Jaffa, that he has a protection from the Adouan and an escort from Abu Dis. A hubbub of conversation can be heard over stream. They seem to know our strength as well as we know our weakness. Bedaween, Syrian, Saxon, and Arab (Saïd goes for nothing in a fray) must count five guns, some of them doubtless tabanjas. Now an Arab pays a Frank the very high compliment of thinking it madness to attack him under a superiority of many to one. Standing on our guard, and noting every gesture and every tone, we light our cigarettes, and lounge over the stream, as though the expectation of a fight were the last thing in our thoughts.

At length, one of the Salhaan demands from the great English sheikh, as the price of peace, a tabanja, a supply of powder, jebilé, and bread. Mohammed, who now comes dashing down the bank, brandishing his long lance, takes up the talk, replying that the English sheikh will give them, in that way, neither tabanja, powder, jebilé, nor bread ; but that he invites the Salhaan sheikh to come over and eat

salt in his tent. Two or three fellows rush down into the water, and one of these, bolder than the rest, leads in his mare ; but Yakoub and Mohammed yell out that the great English sheikh is in a rage, and that no man shall step on the Ford on pain of being shot. A new hubbub sets in ; the only questions with the swarthy orators being the number of our barrels and the value of our traps.

Fear of the tabanja seems to rule the talk. In debating whether they will plunge into the stream, attack our tent, and take their chances of blows and plunder, some fear of offending the Adouan, some dread of calling down Hassan Bey, some shred of respect for the British consul, may be present to their minds ; but the sight of revolvers is the main obstacle on which they dwell. A six-shooter is a weapon which as yet the Bedaween only know by its own report ; and like a steam ship, a rifled gun, a telegraph wire, a railway engine, it is a product of science appalling to the savage mind. Most rovers of the Desert believe that when once a tabanja is set going, it never ceases to fire, and while firing never fails to kill, until its owner bids it stop. It is Shaitan's tool, if not Shaitan's spirit.

But then, on the other side, the fascination which a tabanja exercises over the Arab mind, makes him yearn for it with an ardour like that of love ; and the passion to possess a weapon so terrible in his neighbours' eyes may tempt him into perils from which he would otherwise naturally shrink. Here he has the temptation of tabanjas ; how many he does not know ; two he may fairly count on ; and in the present troubles of his government, the perpetrators of a single crime may hope to escape either punishment or pursuit. Are they aware that Hassan Bey is in Stamboul ?

Such points as these, we know too well, are flowing rapidly through their talk ; but seeing that we can only help them to a decision by indifference to their cries and threats, we lay our loaded pieces on the carpet, full in view of the marauders, and sit down on the slope to eat our lunch.

The bread being cut, the fowls displayed, the tea boiled,

the melons and pomegranates heaped about, one fellow, bolder than the rest, rushes into the water, as though he would compel his companions to decide for action ; but on Mohammed raising his matchlock, and his kinsmen calling him back, he sullenly returns. Falling to the meal, we are beginning to think the affair will come to nothing, when Abdallah rides back slowly into camp, bringing in as a prisoner that very scout whom we had seen and chased near the brake. The wretch is more than half dead with hunger and with fright. He is one of the Ehtaimât, a despised and mongrel race, too cowardly to fight, too lazy to work, who dwell among the ruins of Jericho, drawing wood and water for the Turks, exhibiting their lewd dances to the Franks, and acting as spies to the marauding tribes. Abdallah, having taken him under the tamarisks, making signs to the Salhaan across the river, understands his case ; so slipping from his mare, and seizing a stout bramble, he leads the spy into my tent, points out to him the tabanjas, the fruit and fowls, the bread and tobacco, and after allowing him full time to feast his eyes on the white flesh, to fill his nostrils with the fumes of tea, catches him by the neck, thrusts him down the steep bank, forces him into the river, and with loud thwacks and curses, drives him upon the Ford, and over it, in full view of his employers on the other side. Among Franks such an act would have raised every carbine against the insolent foe, but the sheikh seems to know his countrymen ; for instead of these blows and curses causing the Salhaan to foam into passion, they seem to provide them with an admirable jest. The truth perhaps is, that the whole affair has been a game of brag, which the Bedaween begin to see that they have played and lost.

A voice from the other bank now calls a parley. Yakoub explains to me, aside, that the Ehtaimât spy having told his tale, and the Salhaan chiefs, who so rarely indulge in the taste of flesh, being stirred by the thought of roast fowl and hot tea, of which latter luxury they are passionately fond, will now offer to come over on any terms. And so it proves.

In a few minutes Mohammed comes to the tent-door with a message from the Salhaan, saying that the three sheikhs will pay their English brother a morning visit, if they may bring over their mares and carbines. To this there is no objection.

The first sheikh, not Goblan, but a nephew, is a handsome young Arab, spare and lithe, about thirty years old, with black eyes, thin hair, and a very swarthy cheek. One man of his kin is fair, his cheek being ruddy, his eye almost blue. Among the Bedaween this young fellow is thought beautiful. Dressed in Frank costume he might be taken for a Saxon, perhaps for a Dane. Asking about his country and his people, we find that, however fair, he is a true child of Esau, a dweller in the Moab mountains, a countryman of Ruth.

The men first break bread with us standing ; when we have all eaten a piece, they sit down on their heels. After devouring the fragments of our meal, emptying everything except the flask of wine, they beg a little tobacco, and smoke, at our expense, the hospitable pipe.

When he has calmed his nerves by a few whiffs in silence, the sheikh observes that inasmuch as we have broken bread, and become brothers of the Salhaan, there can be no longer the same objection on our side of the tent to giving him a tabanja. We have two tabanjas, they have none. Our very servant (he means our master, Yakoub) has a tabanja. In Frangistan, he has heard it said, tabanjas may be bought in every bazaar. Can we not spare one for a brother ? Deaf to all persuasion, we give them of our fruit, our bread, and our tobacco ; none of our ammunition and our arms. The fair Arab then craves, as a final favour, that I will let him look at the tabanja ; let him hold it in his hand. For love of his countrywomen Rachel and Ruth, I would gladly let him have his will ; but we are sitting on the bank of a rapid stream, and I fear lest his virtue may be as frail as that of Rachel when she stole away the teraphim from her father's house. Seeing me firm on this point, the young man begs

me to fire it off ; but I tell him, with a grave smile, that whenever it is fired it kills a man, and since they have eaten bread and become our brothers, it would be murder to shed their blood.

The shot goes home. After that, they begin to beg for trifles ; nothing in our tent, from a lucifer match to a dose of quinine, being too foreign for their greed. There is a touch of humour, as it seems to me, in giving a piastre apiece to three swarthy fellows who have only just been debating among themselves whether they should attempt to rifle your saddle-bags and cut your throats.

So the Salhaan and the Saxon—the rover of the desert and the rover of the sea—sit down together under the canes, eating the Bethlehem grapes and sucking the Lebanon leaf, near the spot on which Joshua had encamped with the forty thousand fighting men, before marching up to Gilgal, and close to the bar on which John had baptized the multitudes who flocked to him from Judea and Galilee.

In dress, in manner, and in aspect, John, the cousin of our Lord, must have had something in common with this young Arab sheikh. A man of the same race and lineage, he also wore a shirt of camels'-hair, gathered in at the waist by a leathern belt ; he had the swarthy hue which comes from a Syrian sun ; he dwelt in the desert ; he fed on coarse food, on locusts and herbs, and wild honey ; and he drank no wine or other fermented juice.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JESUS AT BETHABARA.

AFTER Joseph's death, the date of which is unknown, it seems clear that JESUS continued to labour in his father's trade; going about the country with his axe, his chisel, his measuring-line and rule; seeking such work as a Jew could find; and doing it with all his might. A carpenter's tasks were of many kinds: making benches for the synagogues, shaping poles and beams for tents, trimming masts, repairing boats, cutting lintels for doorways, mending roofs, making stools and shelves for domestic use. In labours like these JESUS was engaged until he had completed his thirtieth year.

It need not be thought that because he tramped about Galilee, mending benches in the synagogue and boats on the lake, that his occupations were considered mean. They were in fact holy. Every Jew, from the peasant in his hut to the high priest in his palace, learned some craft. If JESUS was a carpenter, St. Paul was a tent-maker, Rabbi Ishmael was a needle-maker, Rabbi Simon a weaver, Rabbi Jochanan a shoemaker. All labour of the hand was held in honour. One of the most despised of all employments among the Jews was that of tending sheep and goats; the office of a woman or of a slave; yet David had been taken from the hill-side by Samuel, and after being a shepherd had been made a king. But a rise so great had been accepted as a wonder and a sign; like that of the prophet

Amos, who startled the King of Israel by saying that he had risen from being a herdsman and a gatherer of the sycamore fruit. Compared with the occupation of David, that of JESUS was exalted; for the craft of carpenter was one of those noble grades from the proficients in which it was lawful to elect high priests. No handicraft could be followed by a slave; and none but a freeman could learn a trade. Some trades were, indeed, less eminent than others; to wit: the art of a tanner was condemned as noisome; the arts of a barber, a weaver, a fuller, a perfumer, were all considered mean; and no man following these crafts could be allowed, on any pretence, to serve in the sacred office. A tanner, like Jose of Sephoris, might become a rabbi; he could never be made High Priest. Not so with the craft of carpenter: a craft which had a part of its functions in the synagogue and the temple; which was often adopted as a profession by men of noble birth; and which enjoyed the same sort of repute among the Jews that is given in England to the church, the army, and the bar.

JESUS followed this trade until his thirty-first year, when the time would arrive at which he could teach and preach the truth. A Levite rule had fixed this age at thirty years: "from thirty years old and upwards, even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service:" and this Mosaic rule had escaped the changes introduced before and under the Maccabees. At thirty, John had begun to preach. So, on closing his thirtieth year, JESUS laid down his axe and chisel, his line and rule; and going by the caravan road to Bethabara, he saw the multitudes camped about the Great Ford, so full to them of human story and of symbolic beauty; cleansing their flesh, repenting of their sins, and waiting for their Deliverer to appear. He passed the Ford; walking by the plains of Jericho into the limestone hills, into that waste country where the Essenes dwelt in caves; and there, among the wildest scenery on earth, rocks and chasms, dry wells and lairs of savage beasts, he spent forty days alone, purging his flesh from dross,

and chastening his spirit for that baptism which was to be a sign among his people that Israel had gone astray, and that every man must be born again into his holy Church.

Poor people from the vineyards and workshops flocked to John's camp on the Jordan; where they heard him preach repentance of sin, and many were baptized; some being Essenes, some Pharisees, still more Galileans; but no priests from the temple, no princes from Zion; for such men, had they heard of John at all, would have treated his eloquence as raving, his baptism as a jest.

Though the Sadducees had everything to risk—their state, their opulence, their sanctity—by a change of system, they felt little or no malice against reformers like John. If a preacher disturbed the public peace, so as to give the legions an excuse for coming into the Holy City, they could act with rigour; but for zeal about the salvation of souls they had the toleration of a sincere contempt. The Pharisees, having more piety, had more of the persecuting spirit; and their doctors regarded this movement on the Jordan very much as a few years earlier they had regarded that of Judas in Galilee—a sign that a day was coming when stripes on the cloak and frontlets on the brow would not be considered everything to an earnest man. Therefore, though the easy Sadducees, busy with their feasts and pomps, disdained to trouble themselves about John, he was not left to work upon these simple minds unwatched. The elders, being mostly Pharisees, and expecting a Messiah, felt a keen anxiety about him; and when people began to speak of him in the gateways and the temple courts, urging that he must be either Elias or Christ, they sent down to Jericho some of their trusty but unknown priests, with orders to learn what they could of John. To this end they questioned him before all the people: “Art thou the Christ?”—“No.” “Art thou Elias?”—“No.” “Art thou the Prophet?”—“No.” John's message was not for them, and no duty bound him to assist these spies in their evil

quest. But they pressed him again, saying that they must have an answer for the Sanhedrin :

“Who art thou? What sayest thou of thyself?”

John replied to them in the words of Isaiah: “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord!”

Then they began to question him as to why—if he were not Christ, not Elias, not the Prophet—he baptized the people?

What could he tell them? Baptism was not a Jewish rite. A stranger coming into the synagogue had to be immersed in water, as a sign of his being cleansed from his former sin; but to baptize a Jew was to announce that he had not previously been his Father Abraham’s son. More; if one man needed this purification of water, every man in Jewry needed it; the same thing as saying that the people had gone astray, and that these Jews were no longer members of the Church of God.

John did not deny that his countrymen had gone astray, and must be received through a new baptism into the kingdom of heaven :

“I baptize with water; but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not, he that cometh after me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.”

When He for whom the camp was waiting—though they knew him not—came down from the hill country and stepped into the stream, the swarthy preacher, looking up into the sky, beheld the Holy Ghost descending in the likeness of a dove; and having been warned in the spirit that he should know the Messiah’s person by this very sign of an alighting dove, he felt in his own heart, and told the men who were near about him, that his eyes had at last beheld the Son of God.

The Son of God! Then He whom all their prophets had foretold was once again said to have come. Imagine the joy which thrilled through that expecting and tumultuous crowd on the Baptist’s words being passed from lip to lip!

A lordly Sadducee might smile at such predictions ; finding his house bright and cheery, his friends in office, his party in high repute ; and reading Isaiah and Micah in the same critical spirit in which he read Homer and Hesiod. But the craftsmen and shepherds believed in their prophets as they believed in hunger and thirst, in sunshine and rain. If anything was true on earth, it was true, in a Jew's idea, that a Messiah would come, and that when this Messiah was proclaimed, the kingdom of heaven would be nigh at hand. But under the light of his Oral Law, he read these Messianic prophecies all amiss. His hope was in a great prince ; a man wiser than Judas of Gamala, braver than Herod the Great ; for his fancies were of the world only, of its silver and gold, its palaces and thrones. In his eyes, the kingdom of heaven was a kingdom of the earth, having its chief seat in Zion, and places of honour in its court for all the saints. Most of the Jews had gone too far astray to imagine that the battles of Shiloh could be fought with the sword of the Spirit ; that the captains of His host would be the despised of men ; that the only crown which He would wear on earth would be a wreath of thorns. The Pharisees looked for a soldier, a judge, a prince ; a more valiant Gideon, a more fortunate Samson, a more splendid David ; and such a personage they wanted to see in their Son of God.

Crowding around John, they clamoured for their king ; wishing to put him at their head, and to declare his advent with a shout. How would he display his power ? When would he begin his march ? Would he drive out the faction of Annas ? Would he sweep away the legions of Pilate ? Not the least eager of those who put such questions to each other were the three young men from Galilee. Standing near to their Master, soon to be their Master no more, Andrew and John implored him to show them the man on whom he had seen the Dove come down ; and as JESUS chanced to be then walking on the river bank, going home to his lodging, John pointed to him as he passed, saying :

“ Behold the Lamb of God.”

Andrew and John ran after JESUS ; for if he were the Christ whom they had sought, He, and He only, was their Lord : the one desire of their hearts. Hearing these earnest feet behind him, JESUS turned round to the young men, saying :

“ What seek ye ? ”

They asked him where he dwelt, and he bade them come home with him and see. So they walked home with him ; probably to a booth of reeds and twigs, built under a palm-tree ; a long way from the Ford it would appear, since it is noted as the tenth hour when they arrived ; on which JESUS invited them to stay with him for the night. What words were spoken, what deeds were done, in that long April night, we have not been told ; but we know that under those nodding palms and these silent stars the two young fishermen from Galilee were that night chosen for the kingdom of God.

When it was day, Andrew ran for his brother Simon, crying : “ We have found the Messiah ! ” on which Simon went back with him to the spot where JESUS dwelt. Seeing the third fisherman coming, the Master chose him also ; giving him a new name, perhaps to distinguish him from his neighbour, Simon the Galilean.

“ Thou art Simon the son of Jona : thou shalt be called Cephas.”

Cephas was a Chaldaic word, meaning rock or stone : the same as Petros in Greek, Petrus in Latin, and Pierre in French. In English the name does not carry its symbolic sense ; for the man's nature was like the basalt tumbled in heaps and lying in quarries about his native hill. And these three young men were the original members of the Christian church.

A declaration that the Son of God had come and was in their midst, unknown to them, would have placed the man of whom it was said in conflict with the laws as taught in the Great College and practised in Cæsar's court. A Messiah, whether true or false, was a man to be feared by those in

place; by Annas as a rival priest, by Pilate as a pretender to the throne. Being proud and strong, such men might be slow to act, and when they acted would be sure to observe all legal forms. But as magistrates, they were bound to preserve order; the commons were hot and weak; and a tumult in the Baptist's camp might bring in from Jericho a sudden array of Roman troops, under the command of captains less discreet than Pilate. No man could yet guess that the new Messiah was to be of another nature than the old; most men hoped that he would be the same in kind, though higher in his degree of power. Pilate could not know that His words would be those of peace, His triumphs those of patience; and the Procurator of Judea, wise and fair as he seemed, had shown that he could be swift and savage in chastising disturbers of the public peace.

JESUS needed to be wary in his steps. The movement around him was in some sort a plebeian secession from Jerusalem; the Jewish Mons Sacer being the Ford, the Jewish Virginius being John. He could not put himself at the head of a seceding body; of a fragment of a sect. Nor could he allow himself to be proclaimed their king. They had to come to him; but before they could call him Lord, they must be changed in heart, they must be born into a new life. The work which he had to do on earth was a work of time; to be done with individual men and not with crowds; in the house, in the workshop, in the vineyard, in the threshing-floor, among the duties and toils of life, not in a tumultuous company and a separated camp.

In his own beautiful Galilee, under the half-pagan rule of Antipas Herod, among the mixed population of Syrians, Greeks, and Jews, he would be free to teach in the synagogue, free to live among the people, free to lay the foundations of his Church in the hearts of men.

So the day after he had called Peter to himself, he set out from the Ford, going up by the caravan road beyond Jordan into the lake country, leaving the warlike Separatists clamouring for their king.

CHAPTER XXX.

CANA IN GALILEE.

FAR away from the Pharisees' camp, from the Sagan's palace, from the Procurator's court, the Messiah's reign was beginning ; his princes and captains being three poor fishermen from the lake of Galilee.

Still swarming into this fertile province, the Greek settlers and the Roman officers were raising cities in the strong places, launching ships on the canals and lakes, wedding towns and stations of imperial value by noble roads. One of their great roads ran through the province from west to east and north. Starting from Acre, a city called Accho in the days of Simeon, Ptolemais in those of Christ ; touching at Sephoris, the old capital on the hill, a commanding post near the head of Esdraelon ; dropping down the gorges of Hattin, where Jesus now preached his Sermon on the Mount ; entering the gates of Tiberias on the lake ; hugging the shore line from Tiberias to Magdala, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, where it crossed the Jordan by a bridge into the Greek city of Julias ; this road sped thence by the base of Mount Hermon to Damascus : a work of noble art ; paved like the Via Sacra ; defended from Arab thieves by block houses, such as protect the present road from Jerusalem to the sea. Parts of this road can still be traced ; near Acre in the paving-stones ; near Tell Hum in the cutting of a rock. Along this great avenue poured the streams of Roman and Egyptian life ; the court of Herod,

the legions and their eagles, the buffoons and athletes of the circus, the slaves and concubines of kings, actors and eunuchs, merchants and pilgrims, with the sumptuous traffic, the spices and jewels, the silks and drugs, from Egypt and Cathay. Much wealth passing to and fro, many thieves infested this Roman road : Arabs from the mountains beyond the lake ; Moabites and Gileadites ; fathers of these Anezi and Shammai tribes which still swarm over, every spring-tide, into Galilee, and devour the peasants' crops.

When JESUS and the three young men came up from Bethabara into the lake country, escaping the too early notice of the Pharisees, they passed by the splendid Greek cities, going home to the house at Capernaum in which Peter, with his wife, his wife's mother, and his children, dwelt. Under their humble roof he rested for the night only ; adding three new members to his infant Church. There he saw Philip, a native of Bethsaida, a fellow-townsmen of Peter and Andrew, and called him to his side, by the form of invitation : "Follow me." Philip is a Greek name, and the man who bore it may have been a Syrian of Greek descent. He was the fourth disciple called. This Philip had a friend, Nathanael bar Tolmai, a native of Cana, a small town perched on a knoll in the hill country of Galilee, four or five miles from Nazareth ; a man who had been also watching for the Messiah's advent. Philip, therefore, ran and sought him, his friend, saying : "We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, in JESUS the son of Joseph from Nazareth : " words which seem to imply that both Philip and Nathanael had known JESUS by name and sight ; a fact which is otherwise likely in itself.

"Can any good come out of Nazareth ?" said Nathanael, with the local feeling of a neighbour ; to which Philip answered in the brief words : "Come and see." Nathanael was the fifth disciple whom JESUS called. A little incident in this calling of Nathanael may have led JESUS into the first open exhibition of his power ; for on the new disciple from Cana

expressing his awe and wonder that the Lord should be able to describe him under the fig-tree, where he could not have been seen in the flesh, JESUS told him he would soon see greater things ; and a few hours later, in Nathanael's own town of Cana, the first and most symbolical of all his miracles was performed.

The next man to be called into the infant Church was James, the brother of John. The father of these young fishermen, James and John, named Zebedee, was a native of the lake country, perhaps of Bethsaida, like his neighbour and friend Jona, a man of substance, and the owner of a boat. Salome, his wife, the mother of James and John, a woman of quick feelings, easily gained to the new faith, eager to see her sons advanced to the high place which she believed would be their lot, was one of the very first female converts to the church.

But neither John nor Peter, neither Philip nor Nathanael, had any true foresight of what they would have to do. They were drawn to JESUS by his gracious aspect, by his earnest words, by his charm of character ; not by any doctrine which they had heard him preach. As yet he had said little, except to their hearts, and that little they had been free to understand in their own way. Nor could he trust them with the mighty charge he bore, until their eyes had been opened, their natures purged, and their affections won. He had to treat these grown men as though they were little boys, training them to think and move, less by the light of knowledge than by the power of love. Hence he bade them follow him, live with him, talk to him, so that they might learn to see as he saw, speak with his accent, labour in his spirit. Until a great change had been wrought in his soul, no Jew of that Separatist generation could have tolerated the idea that all men were brethren, and that the whole world might be saved. Yet the mission of JESUS was to announce this truth ; to prove it by the evidence of his life and death ; and to prepare the ministers who should carry it to the ends of the earth.

His mission was divine ; but having to be accomplished by human means, a number of chosen men, Peter and John, Andrew and James, Philip and Nathanael, with the rest who were still to be found, had to be led gently on, first to hear, then to seize, afterwards to proclaim, the great fact that Jew and Greek were equally called into the kingdom of God. It was a work of time.

From Capernaum, JESUS and the young men walked up by the Roman road to Cana, a little village on a hill, nestling in the midst of gardens and groves, five miles from Nazareth, and so much nearer to Capernaum. There they found Mary and his brethren come to the wedding of one of Nathanael's neighbours. JESUS, being bidden to the feast, accepted the invitation, that the first public display of his divine power might be for ever associated in the minds of men with the joys of the bridegroom, the festivities of love, and the sanctities of home.

The piety and grace of marriage were at that time under a passing cloud ; many of the Separatist doctors holding that the love of man for woman was a sign of corrupted nature, and that the state of matrimony was a state of sin. In the early ages, marriage had been given as a precious lot to all the seed of Adam : "A man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." That gift had been used and abused ; the best of men, from Abraham to Gideon, from Elkanah to David, having taken to themselves many wives, until the evil had reached its height in the splendid harem of David's son. But from the days of Ezra and the Exile, when so many other things had been changed in Israel, the schools of Jewish thought had grown less easy and indulgent towards domestic love, as this love had been practised in the pastoral tent. No new law had been given ; a man might still marry a hundred wives ; and some men, rich and ostentatious, had married their six or seven ; but the habits of mind which had led Gideon and David into polygamy, had fallen into disrepute ; the number who inclined to keep

hareems had become less and less ; until public feeling had grown so hostile to the vice, that the nine wives of Herod the Great appeared to many persons less the signs of his glory than the evidence of his shame. So far the course of thought had been good and pure ; but the reforming Pharisees had not been able to cool their ardour at the point of allowing a good man to marry a single wife. To some the principle at issue had appeared to be the same whether a man sought consolation of spirit in the love of many or of one. Love itself was the flaw. Love itself was the sin. Many good men had begun to think of marriage as a necessary evil, a compromise with the flesh and the devil, a beautiful and terrible snare to the soul. The more a Jew aspired to holiness of life, the more he affected to shun the society of women, lest his heart should be corrupted through his eyes and ears. A pretentious Pharisee would shut his eyes in a damsel's presence, and knock his head against a wall if he met a female in the street. One Hebrew school had reduced this feeling into words and rules ; an Essene of the holier grade was not allowed to marry ; and in the lower ranks of his order it was considered a proof of virtue to abstain. Thus there had arisen in Palestine a church which, in the name of purity and grace, had set aside God's holy ordinance of marriage as an evil thing, and introduced in its place a creed which in a hundred years would have delivered up this lovely planet to the dominion of savage beasts.

Not then without pressing motive was the Lord's first public appearance made in connection with the marriage rite. A monastery may be peopled from the outer world ; a sect may exist though its members are childless ; but a nation cannot prosper without family ties ; and a gospel which is to govern mankind must necessarily admit the sanctity of domestic love.

JESUS did more than grace the feast by his presence. That alone would have been much ; since many of those holy men who had not yet gone the length of describing

marriage as an act of shame, spoke loudly against the mirth and frolic which accompanied the Oriental rite.

A Hebrew wedding had nothing to do with religious forms ; called in no priest ; implied no offerings to the temple. It was, above all, a social act ; conducted with the laughter and the sports of an English May-day and a harvest home. A feast was given in either the bridegroom's house, or in his father's house. Neighbours and friends were bidden to come in ; stone vessels with water stood near the door, so that every one might lave his hands before sitting down to eat ; and as the sun went down, the bridegroom and his friends, attired in gay robes, anointed with oil and scented with myrrh, set out from the house, preceded by drums and pipes, attended by singers and torchmen, followed by a jocund multitude of boys and women, to fetch home the bride. Zoned in her mystic belt, garlanded with flowers, clothed in a long white veil, which hid her person from head to foot so fully that the sharpest Jacob in Cana could not have told whether the lady were Rachel or Leah, the bride and her maidens awaited this procession ; the act of taking her away from her father's house being the essence of the public ceremony. The bridegroom on coming to the house, took his beloved in his arms, set her under a canopy, and with a swell of drums and songs, marched her merrily through the streets. A Ruler of the Feast, perhaps riding on an ass, went first, the pipers behind him, then the bride and her maidens, afterwards the bridegroom and his friends, followed by the torchmen, the singers, the guests of the night, and, last of all, the rabble of the place. The merriment lasted long ; seven days, fourteen days ; during which time of feasting, the guests sang songs, made riddles, played games, and rejoiced with the bridegroom in his joy.

Men less pure and wise in heart than JESUS feared lest the lights and unguents, the glancing veils, the sounds of music, the night processions of youths and maidens, the merry meetings in which wine went round, and talk ran chiefly upon love, should lead to sin. Menachem would

have fled from a marriage feast. Banus and John the Baptist would have denounced such scenes. The Essene and the Pharisee shrank from human nature ; but the ways of JESUS were not their ways. Menachem was the leader of a sect ; JESUS the legislator for a world. He entered into the house of mirth ; he mingled in the feast ; he shared in the bridegroom's joy ; and when the wine ran out, he ordered the six great lavers into which the guests had dipped their hands to be filled with fresh water, and carried up by the servants to the Ruler of the Feast, who, pouring it out, discovered that it was good wine. All Cana was the witness of this miracle ; and Nathanael saw the first of those greater things which JESUS had promised at Capernaum that he should live to see.

This miracle was, in some sort, the consecration of love and wine ; the richest blessing and the happiest gift of God to man. In this sudden separation of his system from that of John, JESUS gave the first grand lesson to his infant Church. John drank no wine ; ate only wild food ; lived in a cave ; renounced the joys of marriage ; set his soul against everything that could delight the eye and quicken the pulse. JESUS began his diviner labours by showing that nature is innocent, that mirth is lawful, that the use of all good things is good. And what he had done that day in Cana, he never ceased to repeat until the night before Calvary. He loved to feast and make glad ; to anoint himself with oil ; to put his feet into the bath. He said, I am the vine. He compared himself to a bridegroom. Many of his discourses were made at the table ; his most holy sacrament was founded at a supper ; he adopted bread and wine as the symbols of his own flesh and blood.

When the feast was ended at Cana, new scenes began to open on his Church. "The Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem;" being his first visit to the Holy City in his new character of Lord and Christ.



CHAPTER XXXI.

JERUSALEM UNDER THE PASHA.

ON the whip hand as you ride from the rocky plateau lying west of Jerusalem into the Bethlehem gate, the way of all those who come up from Egypt and from the sea, stands the strong Tower of David ; a pile of rocks, bevelled and shaped by the art of man into a solidity resembling that of nature. Fronting this tower is the tall house or palace of the English bishop ; and between these edifices of the old and the new ages, a lane and open court, unpaved, unkempt, uneven, a place encumbered with the litter of men and beasts, runs along the high ridge of Zion. A camel is lying down under its load, a swarm of dogs fighting for a bone, a knot of peasants waiting to be hired. Dotted about this open court, in their white sacks, their gabardines, and their gaudy shawls, squat the barbers and cooks, the pipe-cutters, donkey-boys, money-changers, dealers in pottery and in fruit, all busy with their work or chaffering about their wares.

In the Jerusalem of Suraya Pasha, this court in front of the Bethlehem gate—the chief entrance for trade and pilgrimage into the Holy City, just as the Damascus gate is the chief entrance for pomp and honour—is the market, the exchange, the club, the law-court, the playhouse, the parliament of a people who despise a roof, and prefer to eat and drink, to buy and sell, to wash and pray, in the open air. Here everybody may be seen, everything may be bought,

excepting those articles of luxury found in the bazaar. Yon negro dozing near his mule is a slave from the Upper Nile, and belongs to an Arab bey who lets him out on hire. These husbandmen are waiting for a job ; their wage is a penny a day. Last week they were shaking olives for the Armenians ; next week they will be carrying water for the Copts ; but their chief employers are the Greek monks, who own nearly all the best vineyards and olive grounds lying within a dozen miles of this Bethlehem gate. They are a hardy and patient race ; Moslem in creed, Canaanite in blood. The man clothed in white linen, with an inkhorn in his belt, is a public scribe ; a functionary to have been seen in this gateway any time since the days of Ezra, perhaps since the days of David, who likened his tongue to the pen of a ready writer. These jars and vases, these urns and mugs, are made of native clay, spun in the Potter's field, and also in the dark vaults adjoining the Damascus gate. In colour, in pattern, this domestic earthenware is probably as old as the age of Ruth. These rude clay cups, pinched in at the side, are still called Virgins' lamps ; they are similar to those trimmed by the Seven ; and they are still fed with sweet olive oil and carried by the Arab and Jewish girls.

All centuries, all nations, seem to hustle each other in this open court under David's tower. In pushing through the crowd of men, you may chance to run against a turbaned Turk, a belted Salhaan, a gaudy Cavash, a naked Nubian, a shaven Carmelite, a bearded papa, a robed Armenian, an English sailor, a Circassian chief, a Bashi Bazouk, and a converted Jew. In crossing from the gateway to the convent, you may stumble on a dancing dervish ; you may catch the glance of a veiled beauty ; you may break a procession of Arab school-girls, headed by a British female ; you may touch the finger of a leper held out to you for alms.

Your feet are now on the high place of Zion, in the court of David, in the forum of Pilate. On your right hand and on your left, glaring grey and hot in the October sun, rise

the strong forts built by Herod, the barrack of Saladin, the palace of a Latin priest, a Jew money-changer's shop, a London missionary church. The phantoms of all time seem to hover round you. Beyond the barrack of Saladin, on the line of wall going south, springs the round Asiatic minaret of a mosque; under the shadow of adjoining towers lie the green wastes of the Armenian garden; while behind the English palace hides the deep pool of Hezekiah, from the waters of which project some richly-wrought columns of an age unknown. Into this great pool peer down the windows of a Coptic convent and a German inn. East and north of this pool stand Calvary, Golgotha, the dome of the Sepulchre. Looking down the slope of Zion from the battlements of David's tower, the eye falls on and over the Armenian convent; the hospice of St. John, once the proud home of Knights Templars, now a shapeless ruin; the Moslem bazaar; the Jewish wailing-place; the Temple platform, with its green cypresses and prickly pears, its marble screens, its mosque of El Aksa, and its beautiful dome of the Rock; a scene framed by the mountain chain of Scopas and Olivet, through a depression in which chain you catch a glimpse of the Dead Sea.

This Zion ridge was always the commanding point in Jerusalem. The Macedonians built a castle lower down, near the Temple gate, which Herod afterwards enlarged into the fortress Antonia; but this defence was erected for the purposes of a city police; and the true strongholds of Jerusalem were always erected, from the times of David to those of Saladin, on the west and north; that is to say, around this present open court by the Bethlehem gate. It is not the highest spot within the city walls; for an ancient tower within the Saracenic lines controls it; but these new Arab lines stretch far beyond the more antique walls, inclosing part of that high ground from which the city was assailed by Titus and Nebuchadnezzar, still known as the Assyrian Camp. Zion was the city of Jebus; afterwards the seat of David and of David's sons. Here Herod completed his

three great towers of Hippicus, Phasaelus, and Mariamne; and here lay the head-quarters of the Roman force.

From these battlements Jerusalem unrolls itself before



JERUSALEM.

you like a map. The platform at your feet is Zion and the prolongation of it to your left is Gareb; that trench, running visibly through the city from north to south, is the Cheesemonger's valley; yon second platform, rising beyond the great trench, and parted into two halves by the Haram wall, gives you Bezetha and the Temple hill.

In its social and civil aspects, the Holy City is now Moslem and Arabic; but the Christians and Jews are strong enough to lend it features; and with the fierce repulsion of class from class, of race from race, which exists in every part of Palestine, it has come to pass that though the Arab people may be found dwelling in every quarter, the foreign nations are each confined to one.

The Christians live for the most part on this crest of Zion, in a quarter extending from the Tomb of David, near the English cemetery, along the high ground to the Holy Sepulchre. In this quarter stand the Greek convents of St John, St. Demetrius, St. Basil, St. Theodore, St. George, St. Constantine, St. Nicholas; the Armenian convent of St. James, with their church of St. Saviour, their great hospice, and seminary; the Latin convent of St. Saviour, with the school and hospital of St. Louis; the Coptic hospice and convent; the English church; the palaces of the Latin, Greek, and Armenian patriarchs; the houses of the Russian and Anglican bishops; Hauser's Inn; the English carpenters' shops, for the use of converts; and the Protestant schools. Of course, it is the finest quarter for shops and trade. Here, the streets are a shade less gloomy than elsewhere, and some of them are wide enough for a camel and a man to pass.

On the same ridge of Zion, but lower down the slope, where it falls away into the Cheesemonger's valley, lies the Jewish quarter, which a man may smell afar off; a quarter goodly in itself, once covered with the palaces of priests and kings, but now the danger and opprobrium of the Holy Land. There lie, in the midst of alleys and courts unspeakably offensive to eye and nostril, the synagogues of the Ashken-

azim and Sephardim ; the Polish synagogue, a new and tawdry work, with a cupola built in the Saracenic style ; the ancient synagogue, a vault half-buried in the soil ; a Jewish hospice for pilgrims ; and a Jewish infirmary for the sick, of whom there is abundant supply. Around these edifices reek and starve about four thousand Israelites, many of them living in a state of filth as unlike the condition of their clean, bright ancestors as the life of an English gentleman under Victoria is unlike that of a British serf under Boadicea.

Beyond the great natural trench called the Cheesemonger's valley rise Bezetha and the Temple mount, the two Moslem quarters ; one secular, one holy. Bezetha wears a more eastern and secluded aspect than her neighbour Zion ; the walls being loftier, the gardens greener, the streets wider, and the houses better. A few Franks of the higher grade dwell here among the Turks. East of Damascus street live the Turkish pasha and the English and Austrian consuls ; there will be found the school of Saladin, the Austrian hospice, the house of Dervishes, the Military hospital ; in a few words, the best public buildings and the more aristocratic retreats. The Temple mount, divided from the secular city by lofty walls, makes a quarter of itself ; a quarter of mosques, terraces, colonnades, and gardens ; having its peculiar physiognomies, and being governed by laws and usages of its own.

Beyond this second ridge, and beyond the Haram wall, flows the Wady Cedron, the mysterious valley of Jehoshaphat ; a glacial hollow, dark and steep ; dry in the spring and summer, a mountain torrent in the fall ; which torrent, joining the waters coming down the Wady Hinnom and the Cheesemonger's valley near Enrogel, rolls thence through the great wilderness of Judah, past the convent of Mar Saba, to the shores of the Dead Sea. A sprinkle of fig trees and olive trees dots the slopes of this gloomy ravine of Jehoshaphat ; trees bare and twisted with old age ; in keeping with its ghostly reputation as the antique Valley of the Shadow of Death. Along the white stony sides of Cedron, lie the ashes of a hundred generations, Jebusite, Hebrew, Syrian,

Macedonian, Egyptian, Roman, Persian, Saracen, Frank, and Turk ; some of whose tombs, as those which are called by the names of Absalom, St. James, Jehoshaphat, and Zechariah, rank among the oldest structures in the land ; being true rock temples, carved like those of Petra, with infinite art and labour, into shapes not less enduring than the earth on which they stand. Around these saints and princes lie the unnamed hosts ; each man with his white heap or slab above his head, so that the lower part of Olivet is scarred with a countless multitude of ghostly memorial stones.

No rich local colouring brightens the outward aspect of the Holy City. A ruddy grey stone is the material basis of wall and roof ; for the upper rooms being vaulted, and the covering flat, the house-tops are composed of the same materials as the upright shell. A gilt cross gleams from a church ; a silver crescent sparkles on a mosque ; a belt of white colonnades adorns the Temple hill ; a parapet of red tiles surrounds some of the high roofs ; here a patch of mosaic quickens into beauty a modest dome ; and there a palm-tree waves its elegant fans against the azure sky. But these specks of colour on the prevailing ground only serve to set the landscape in a lower key. A sky of variable tone, Sicilian in its usual depth of blue, yet English in its occasional wealth of mist and cloud, hangs over this mass of limestone roof and wall.

If the colours of Jerusalem are cold and scant, the architectural forms excel in richness and in interest. Cairo and Rome appear to have met. Gates and bastions which would be the pride and glory of any other place—of such a Saracenic city as Seville, of such a Saracenic palace as the Alhambra—only frame and protect the more precious art which they here enclose. In the Church of the Sepulchre, in the Mosque of Omar, you see the two grand cupolas of West and East ; the type of the Pantheon and that of the Memlook kings. This Latin dome of the Sepulchre, like the Roman arch, its parent, is low and round, the upper

part of a globe, the cup of an Italian orange ; that Semitic dome of the Rock, like the Saracenic arch, its parent, is high and pointed, the long end of a cone, the section of a Nilotic melon, of a Syrian grape.

Taking it in mass and detail, you group on the Temple hill—the Mosques of Omar and El Aksa, the domes, the terraces, the colonnades, the kiosks, and fountains—is perhaps the very noblest specimen of building art in Asia. The Saracenic cupola of the Mosque of Omar may be said to defy comparison, even with the proud domes of St. Sophia, St. Peter, and St. Paul. The marble octagon from which that cupola leaps into the air, with the arabesque frieze and circle of pointed windows, may search through Europe for its equal in either grace or strength. In like manner, the whole city of Jerusalem, though it cannot be called beautiful, like Florence, Genoa, Bordeaux, and Edinburgh, is full of hint and contrast—sparkling with epigrams in stone. Twenty light minarets lift you in imagination to the Nile. The rotunda carries you to Constantinople and to Rome ; the immediate model of the church of the Holy Sepulchre being St. Sophia, as the model of that basilica was the Pantheon. Who shall appraise the corridor of El Aksa, the tower of the Serai, the span of the Golden Gate ? A convent here, a synagogue there, add elements to the picture, anomalies to the scene. A thousand low, round cupolas, borrowed from Byzantine art, break the level sky lines into beauty, and in some degree atone for the lack of a second material and for the absence of a brighter tint.

CHAPTER XXXII.

STREETS OF JERUSALEM.

AS the sun goes down over Sôba, four of the five gates now used by the people of Jerusalem are closed and barred. These are, the Damascus gate on the north, near Jeremiah's cave and the Potter's vaults ; St. Stephen's gate, more commonly called Our Lady Marian's, leading out towards Bethany and Olivet on the east ; Dung gate, near the Jews' quarter, in the flow of the Cheesemonger's valley ; Zion gate, lying between the lepers' sheds and the tomb of David. But the Bethlehem gate, the inlet of trade and travel from Egypt and from the sea, stands open for half an hour after gun-fire ; when the oaken valves swing inward, a sentinel turns the key, and no man has the right to pass that portal until another morning shall have dawned. A special pass from Suraya is the only lawful means of ingress during the hours of night ; so that in all common cases, a stranger who arrives too late, a citizen who has loitered in the fields too long, must wind himself in his cloak, select a smooth stone for a pillow, and take his rest under the stars of heaven. A warm climate, a wandering life, an indifference to dirt and dew, enable the natives to bow to such necessities with a patient shrug. A Frank is less easy ; and after riding up from Jaffa in a long day, an Englishman will often spend his night before the closed gate, stamping and yelling for the imperturbable Turkish guard.

Piastres, pushed through the grill, are said to have a miraculous power of slipping back bolts and bars ; but the experiment has been known to fail. In the mystic creeds of the East, even metals lose their virtue on particular days.

The streets of the Holy City should be trod by day ; not only because noon is everywhere warmer in colour than evening, but because Jerusalem is a Moslem and Oriental town, in which the business of life suspends itself from sunset to sunrise.

No gas, no oil, no torch, no wax lights up the streets and archways of Jerusalem by night. Half an hour after gunfire the bazaar is cleared, the shops and baths are closed, the camels stalled, the narrow ways deserted. An Arab has no particular love for lamps and lights. A flicker satisfies him in his room, and he never thinks of casting a ray from his candle into the public street. Darkness comes down like a pall, and by the time that Paris would become brilliant with lamps and gas, Jerusalem is like a City of the Dead. For a little while about the edge of dark, a white figure may be seen stealing from house to house ; at a later hour you may catch the beam of a lantern carried by a slave ; a Frank has been out to see his friend ; a cavash is going to the consul's house ; a bey is visiting his posts. These men have lanterns borne before them ; for in Jerusalem, as in Cairo and Stamboul, a man going home without a light may be arrested as a thief.

What should tempt the inhabitants into their sombre streets ? In a Moslem town, there are no plays, no concerts, no casinos, none of the impure public revelries which help to seduce the young in London, Paris, and new York. Bad men, and worse women, may exist in Zion, as in any other populous place ; but here they have to hide their shameful trades, having no balls, no theatres, no taverns, in which they can meet and decoy the unwary youth. Gaieties of any kind are rare. The nuptial processions which enliven the night in Cairo with lamps and drums have no existence in the Holy Land, where the bridegroom fetches home his bride by day. No one gives dinners, scarcely any one plays

whist. A Moslem loves his home, his hareem, and his offspring, but his house is seldom the place in which he chooses to see his friends. A Frank may invite his neighbours to come and sip acids and repeat to each other that there is still no news; a mollah may call some sheikhs to his roof, where they will squat on clean carpets and recite their evening prayers. Refreshed with lemon-juice, inspired by devotion, these sober revellers, each with his servant and his lantern, seek their homes and beds about the hour at which men in London are sitting down to dine.

But neither feasts nor songs, if there were any such things to be enjoyed in Jerusalem, would tempt from his rooms, at night, a man in whose excited imagination the streets are less safe than the heights of Mizpeh and Olivet, the glens of Tophet and Gehenna, nay, the howling wilderness itself. Not to dwell on the Bedaween thief, though he is deft and quick, nor on the Bashi Bazouk, though he is proud and hot, a man living in Jerusalem has a right to fear that in passing through the streets at night he may be touched by a leper, he may be kicked by a camel, he may be bitten by a cur, he may fall into a pit. The alleys of Zion, and above all others the alleys of the Jewish quarter, reek with decaying fruit, dead animals, and human filth, offensive alike to eye and nostril, in the midst of which fertilizing garbage innumerable armies of rats and lizards race and fight. The hungry dogs, too, prowl by night, savage as wolves and not less brave. A Syrian, tender of heart towards animals of every kind, is particularly zealous in protecting rats and snakes, the friends of his house, and hounds and curs, the scavengers of his court; so that no one dares or desires to purify the Holy City from these dangerous vermin. But worse than the dread of these plagues of Jerusalem by night, is that of the wandering fakeers who devote their lives to Allah, and hang about the holy places, ready to chastise such gïaours as in their untaught opinions profane the mosques. The sultan crushes these wretches with un pitying arm; for he has sense enough to see that they act no less

against policy than against law ; yet they spring up afresh ; coming in from the ends of the earth, from the Soudan, from Borneo, from the Punjaub ; new converts to the faith, inspired with the martyr's zeal. You cannot guard against these fakeers, except by day, for you never know of the offence you have given them, and you cannot tell where they may lie in wait to avenge their imaginary wrongs. A fakeer may have watched you go into the Haram es Shereef—the Temple court—marvelling in his heart why the soldier walking at your side did not chop you down. He may have noticed you uncover your head in the Mosque of Omar ; a deadly insult in his eyes ; for which he has sworn to take your life. Who can tell the ways of this untaught child ? Even now he may be waiting for you in the dark, in the shadow of yon wall, to thrust his poniard into your side.

A wise pilgrim in Jerusalem will keep his convent after gun-fire ; enjoying a chat on the roof, a pipe in the garden, a book in his cell.

Streets in the European sense of words have no existence in Jerusalem. No Oriental city has them, even in name. An Arab, who has a thousand words to express a camel, a sword, a mare, has scarcely one word which suggests a street. A Hebrew had the same poverty of speech ; for such a thoroughfare as the Broadway, the Corso, or the Strand, is quite unknown to the East. Solomon never saw a Boulevard. Saladin never dreamt of a Pall Mall. An Arab city must have sooks in which people trade, quarters in which people live ; for such a city, even when it has grown into the greatness of a capital like Cairo or Stamboul, is still but an intricate camp in wood and stone. It must have quarters ; but it need not have the series of open ways, cutting and crossing each other, which we call streets. Its houses are built in groups ; a family, a tribe, a profession occupying each group of houses. A group is a quarter of itself, having its own sheikh, its own police, its own public law, and being separated from the contiguous quarters by

gates which a stranger has no right to pass. Free communication from one to another is not desired; and such alleys as connect one quarter with another, being considered no man's land, are rarely honoured with a public name. Only two streets are mentioned in the Bible: Baker's Street in Jerusalem, Straight Street in Damascus; and these two examples are not even the exceptions to a common rule; the first being evidently Baker's Place (the sook or market of that trade), while the second was probably a Roman work. No true Oriental city has streets with native names. The great thoroughfare of Cairo is known, in one part as Jeweller's Place, in another as Crockery Place. It is the same in Aleppo and Bagdad. Ten years ago Stamboul enjoyed the same poverty and simplicity, and it was not until the Western Armies occupied Pera and Scutari that the natives began to appreciate the value of this Frankish art. The pious names, by help of which Christians find their way about Jerusalem, such as David Street and Via Dolorosa, are still unknown to the native race.

Except in the sooks and bazaars, the streets are all unpaved. Here the natural rock peeps out through the filth; there a stone of the grand old Tyrian size has fallen into the way, and nearly blocked it up; but commonly the surface on which you walk is composed of mud and sand. Cairo is not paved, Bagdad is not paved. From the days of Solomon to those of Herod, Jerusalem remained unpaved. Nor did that splendid artist, though he laid the main street of Antioch with marble as a kingly gift to the inhabitants, ever attempt to do the same great service for his Jewish capital. In Agrippa's time the work was still to be done. In an Oriental town, where a broad path does not exist, and open communications are not desired, a smooth floor would be of no particular use. Why make it? In the few nooks and corners of Jerusalem where the lanes are paved, as in the markets and bazaars, the work appears to have been done ages ago, by some strange hand, and never to have been repaired. The alleys of the bazaars have once

been laid with marble, now much worn and broken, in one place bare and bright, in another place buried under a cake of mud. In front of the shops in David Street, the floor is laid with huge round stones, skull-shape, on which neither man nor beast can keep his feet. An open sewer runs down each lane, in which offal and carrion, decaying fruit, dead cats, dead curs, the dung of camels and donkeys, fester and wait for the cleansing rain. More than once, when the city has been choked with filth and threatened with pestilence, the gates are said to have been opened in the night for the hyenas to enter and devour the waste ; a means of escape from the abomination which would be used more frequently were the inhabitants not more terrified by the chance of a visit from the Adouan than by fear of the plague.

Dark, arched, and picturesque are all these lanes. Tall houses, bald to the front, with basements and vaults of the time of Herod, with lattices and upper stories of the time of Saladin, some of them having bevelled foundation-stones, with jambs and arches of the richest Arabian art, line the streets of Jerusalem, and nod to each other like the palazzos of Genoa and Venice. Shops and coffee-houses occupy the first flat, as in the chief street of Cairo ; but with greater depth and variety than the Cairene shops. The rows of houses being interrupted at every turn by public buildings, now in ruins—old convents, hospitals, churches, mosques—and rents being high and custom lax, the vaults of these crumbling piles have been seized by Arab and Hebrew traders, partly cleared out, partly propped up, and converted into stables, baths, and mills. The fallen hospice of the Knights Templars, on land adjoining the Holy Sepulchre, affords shelter in its vaults and corridors to a great many braziers, barbers, and corn-chandlers ; one room in the great ruin being used for a bazaar, another for a tannery, a third for a public bath ; the Syrian burrowing in the foundations of the old hospice, just as an Egyptian herdsman cowers into a tomb, and a Roman smith finds lodging in a palace wall.

Enter this coffee-house, where the old sheikh is smoking near the door; call the *cafigeh*, the waiter, commonly a negro slave; command a cup of black comfort, a *narghiley*, and a morsel of live charcoal. Then look round the vault. A dozen men, all bronzed and bearded except yourself, some in rich robes and shawls, some naked to the waist, some dressed in sacks and sandals only, squat about the chamber, each with his hookah and his cup, either dozing by himself, chatting with his neighbour, or listening to a story-teller's endless adventures of love and war. A fountain bubbles in the centre. Mules are feeding in the rear. A heap of stones and mortar fills a corner of the room, and through rents in the ceiling you catch a strip, a circle, of the celestial blue. In fact, you are seated in the crypt of a church, of which the roof and nave have long since fallen into ruin; an example which the crypt will some day follow with a crash. Ask the *cafigeh* why he does not mend those holes in his ceiling; he replies that his house belongs to the Greeks, and that no one objects to a hole in a roof, except when it rains. But why do not the Greeks repair and preserve their property? He cannot say. No one would ask them. God is great and the *effendis* are wise.

Remains of all ages litter and adorn these alleys; here a broken column, there a Corinthian capital, elsewhere an Egyptian sarcophagus. A porphyry shaft may be built into a garden wall, and a plinth of verd-antique may serve as a tailor's board. Many of the common kinds of trades are conducted in the street, and especially such trades as concern feeding the stranger and the poor.

A public thoroughfare is often the poor Arab's only house, where he must eat and drink, and buy and sell. When he wishes to wash, to rest, and to pray, he repairs to the court of his mosque, and at stated times to the mosque itself; for the mosque is the true Moslem's home, which he has a right to enter, and from which no official can drive him away. In the court of his mosque he is sure to find water, in the sacred edifice he is sure to find shade. After

finishing his devotions, he may throw himself on the mats and sleep. No verger has the pretension to expel him from the house of God. But the offices for which the solemnity of his mosque would be unsuitable, must be done in the public places ; where he may have to load his camel, to feed his ass, and to dine and smoke. Humble cooks and *cafeghs* wait for him at the street corners. On three or four broken stones, the cook lights a bunch of sticks ; throws into a pan a few olives and lentils, a piece of fat, a handful of parched corn, and holding this pan over his embers, stirs and simmers these edibles into a mess, the very smell of which ravishes an Arab's soul. A twist of coarse bread, a mug of fresh water, and a pipe of Lebanon tobacco, make up the remainder of his meal ; after which the tired wayfarer will wrap his mantle about his face, lie down among the stones, and pass the soft summer night in dreaming of that happier heaven of his creed in which the heat is never fire and the cold never frost, in which the wells are always full, the dates always ripe, and the virgins ever young.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JERUSALEM UNDER THE HIGH PRIEST.

IN its noble outlines, if not in its more ruinous details, the City of the High Priest must have presented many of the aspects which the City of the Pasha wears to-day. Nature has not changed her forms and colours ; her hills have the same verdure, her valleys the same sweep as of old.

A man entering Jerusalem by the North gate, as JESUS sometimes entered it from the Shechem road, would have Mizpeh and Olivet on his left hand, their grey slopes dotted with sycamores and figs, with great clumps of olive trees, and with here and there a herdsman and his flock. He would see a large open suburb advancing from the gates to meet him, and covering with houses and gardens much of that high plateau which was afterwards enclosed by Agrippa's wall. A tower of grand masonry commanded the north road from the spot now marked by the Damascus gate ; and from this tower the deep natural trench called the Cheesemonger's valley, flowing down through the city into the glens and gardens of Siloam, parted the headland of rock, on which Jerusalem stood, into two main crests ; on the right Gareb-Zion, on the left Bezetha-Akra ; the second crest ending in the platform of Moriah and in the dropping ridge of Ophel. From the Cheesemonger's valley, the ascent to these crests was steep ; but lanes and covered ways ran up the slopes, the houses huddling close upon

each other, while the more spacious palaces and synagogues crowned the tops.

Near the northern entrance into this open suburb, on each side of the great tower, the ground was high and almost level; a plateau wedding the two spurs of Akra and Zion to the mountainous table-land of Judah and Benjamin, and just roughened into picture by mounds and clefts through which the live rock showed its face, and by abundance of almond trees, terebinths, and figs. On all the other sides, west, south, and east, the three dark ravines, called Gihon, Hinnom, and Jehoshaphat, swept round the feet of these parting crests, defending the quarters built on Akra and Zion by mighty natural ditches from any assault that could be delivered by an enemy occupying the neighbouring heights.

Strong walls, with embattled gates and towers, hung over these ravines; two solid and lofty walls, enclosing the old city and the new, which had borne the brunt of every onset of the Assyrian and the Greek. The first of these walls, embracing the city in which David reigned, started from the Lishcath ha-Gazith, the Great Hall of the Sanhedrin on Moriah, crossed the Cheesemonger's valley from east to west, clomb the slope of Zion up to David's tower, and sweeping thence by way of the Essene gate, along the ridge overhanging Gihon, as far south as the fountain of Siloam, curled sharp round Ophel, the priestly quarter, and struck the eastern angle of the Temple mount. The space enclosed within this circuit of the first wall was the old city of Zion. In time, when the people multiplied, and the lower ground to the north, comprising the bed and slopes of the Cheesemonger's valley, became covered with houses, palaces, and mills, a second wall had been thrown round these suburbs; starting from David's tower, and curving like a bow to the Garden gate and the North gate, leaping the Cheesemonger's valley, at a higher point, and thence going south to join Antonia, a castle built by Herod, on the site of a Macedonian fort, as an outwork and defence

of the Temple court. Within this second circuit lay the lower city, of which Antonia was the citadel, as David's tower was that of Zion. In height, in substance, and in aspect, the outer walls were much what they are now; the main differences being, as the foundations declare, that the stones were then more massive, the chambers more frequent, and the gates of a severer style.

In all the finer trifles of man's art, the city of Annas had many and signal points of variation from the modern town. The Giant's Castle did not then exist; the third city of Bezetha-Gareb not needing a citadel for its defence, since it had not yet been taken within the military lines. A man coming into Jerusalem from Shechem would first arrive at this new city—an open suburb, already invading Gareb and covering Bezetha, as well as filling up all that part of the Cheesemonger's valley which had been left beyond the second wall. Bezetha had the appearance of a goodly town. Gareb was only as yet very sparsely occupied by houses; the ground on this side of the north road being rough, a place of gardens and graves, and for that reason shunned by all builders except lepers, beggars, and the poorest class of Jews. The gate opening from the city into this quarter was called Genath, the Garden gate. Almond trees grew in such profusion that the Pool of Hezekiah, lying close by, had come to be known as the Almond Pool. On Gareb, outside the Garden gate, a monument had been erected to the high priest John. A few paces from this structure, Joseph of Arimathea, a noble Jew, a member of the Sanhedrin, had bought a bit of garden, with a wall of uncovered rock, in which he had hewn for himself a sepulchral vault. Outside Joseph's Garden stood a mound, called Golgotha, Skull Place, the Tyburn of Jerusalem; on which thieves, assassins, pirates, heretics, traitors, teachers of falsehood, men the most odious in Jewish eyes, were put to a shameful and cruel death, being nailed by the hands and feet to a wooden cross, and left in the burning sun to die.

These rocks and caves, these groups of almond trees and figs, covered much of Gareb, and only ended where the suburb ended, under the city wall. But near the Garden gate they ceased. No green space, no square, no planted yard, no line of verdure, brightened and refreshed the actual streets. As rule and custom forbade the introduction of manure into the Holy City, nature herself appeared to be almost banished from Jerusalem. There was only one exception to this rigid prohibition of trees and flowers. A part of the Temple area, not being inhabited, was planted with the national tree—the emblem of Judah—the sacred palm. But no fig-tree waved its boughs above the house-top, no vine threw its tendrils round the lattice. A Jewish garden was not made near the house, but was built and laid out beyond the walls, among the cemeteries in the Wady Cedron, on the plateau of Gareb, by the pool of Gihon. The Rose Garden mentioned in the Mishna, in which figs might be sold untithed, was probably a sook or market in Jerusalem like Covent Garden in London. The royal gardens lay at the foot of Ophel, among the sweet waters of Enrogel and Siloam, where Solomon had first planted them for the solace of his Egyptian queen. In the later ages of Herod and Pilate the courts of the palace on Mount Zion were planted with shrubs; but these gardens were made for the delight of strangers, not for that of the citizens; and their presence under the palace wall must have made it difficult for a Separatist Jew to enter into the gates of Pilate's house.

The common gardens of the people were small, and fenced like the garden of Gethsemane of the present day; and were known by the name of some plant which they contained, such as the garden of nuts, the garden of cucumbers, the garden of olives. They were kept for use, even more than for pleasure and beauty; growing herbs for the kitchen, fruit for the table; having a kiosk or chapel for purposes of devotion; and not unfrequently a sepulchre in which many generations of the family had been laid.

Every Jew of rank and station in Jerusalem desired to possess a garden and a grave under the city walls ; the new comer equally with the old dweller ; and a stranger from Sharon or Galilee, when building himself a house in Zion or in Akra, would consider it a duty to hew himself a tomb in Gareb or Jehoshaphat. Joseph, though a stranger in Jerusalem, had pierced a cavity in that rock near Genath and the almond pool—a grave in which never man had yet been laid.

Passing from the open suburb through the north gate into the pent city, you entered a network of narrow, winding, and unpaved streets. The houses were high, the lanes dark and arched. None of the beautiful domes and cupolas which adorn the modern city existed in the time of Annas. Jerusalem owes that beautiful feature, first to the Byzantines, next to the Saracens. A Hebrew roof was flat, having a screen of open tiles going round the ledge, at once to prevent children from falling off and women from being seen. No belfry broke the sky line ; no minaret reared its graceful form into the air. The Temple may, indeed, have been a nobler edifice than the Mosque of Omar ; a native must assuredly have thought it more imposing and august ; though it might not have seemed more brilliant and picturesque to a Roman eye. The style of all Jewish building was tame and flat ; and it may perhaps be said with truth that the capital of Judah owed its magnificence of aspect mainly to its rocks, its ravines, and its walls, to the heaving ground on which it stood, to the splendour of Pilate's palace on Mount Zion, and to the gold and marble of the Temple front.

The two groups of regal and sacred edifices on Mount Zion and Mount Moriah, divided by the Cheesemonger's valley, known in this part of the town as the Xystus, were connected by a grand bridge, crossing the trench, and leading by flights of steps into the temple courts. That bridge was built of enormous stones, and was worthy of the palace and temple to which it led.

Each group of buildings may be pictured to the mind.

David's tower, enlarged and beautified by Herod, capped the high top of Zion, balanced by two towers which the great builder had raised upon its flanks, called Phasaelus and Mariamne, from the names of his favourite brother and his murdered wife. These towers were built solid to a height of forty or fifty feet ; on which solid base of artificial rock stood cisterns for water thirty feet deep ; over which came guard-rooms, armouries, magazines ; and above these chambers stood those breastworks and turrets behind which the slingers and archers fought. From base to parapet these towers of defence were about a hundred and forty feet high ; the stones of which they were built being thirty feet long by fifteen feet broad, levelled and smoothed, and fitting to each other so cleanly that it was said a shekel could nowhere be thrust between the joints. David's tower had a cloister, a bath, and a regal hall ; for under every change of dynasty during a thousand years this noble work had always been the centre and home of the ruling power.

Below these three towers, which Herod called Hippicus, Phasaelus, and Mariamne, lay the new palace, then occupied by Pilate, his wife Claudia, and their household ; a series of Greek buildings, having court within court, portico behind portico, columns of serpentine and porphyry, a vast wall of marble, terraced for promenade and bastioned for defence, two halls of reception and of audience, and sleeping-rooms spacious enough to receive and accommodate a hundred guests. Two royal apartments in this palace bore the names Cæsarium and Agrippium, and in every part of the enclosure the taste of Rome and Antioch reigned supreme. The open courts were planted with trees, through the midst of which verdure a canal was cut and abundance of water poured. Fountains gushed from the mouths of nymphs and dolphins. Flocks of doves and pigeons fluttered through the air. A garden nestled on the low ground to the south. Before the palace gates stretched an open court, in the middle of which, since Herod's dwelling had become the

Roman *prætorium*, lay the bit of mosaic pavement, marking, in a Roman town, the seat of judgment. The Jews called this ground Gabbatha: on it stood a small raised stone or bench, inlaid with curious marbles; on which stone, when public sentence had to be pronounced on criminals, the palace officers fixed the great chair of state. For although a criminal cause might be heard, and the sentence determined in the audience chamber within the palace, it was the custom in Jerusalem to announce this decision in the open air, from the judgment-seat on the Gabbatha, in presence of the assembled people and their priests.

Antipas Herod, having no longer a home in his father's magnificent house on Zion, yet wishing to stand well with the Jews, over whom he still dreamt that he should one day reign, built for himself a new palace in the city; not on the royal hill, not even within the walls; but in the open suburb of Bezetha, where the site of his modest home is still marked by a ruined mosque.

Near the three towers and the king's palace on Mount Zion stood a group of sacred buildings, known as the Seven Synagogues, a mass of edifices loosely resembling the Seven Churches of Bologna: not far from these synagogues stood the palace of the Maccabees, the palace of the Archives, the palaces of Caiaphas, nominal high priest, and of Annas, real high priest.

All these structures, standing on the height and slope of Zion, looked down on the Xystus, the great bridge, and the opposing ridge of Moriah, crowned by the marble walls and golden turrets of the Temple, and displaying the broad white screens, the Corinthian gates, the double colonnades, and majestic halls of the Temple courts.

But Moriah demands a yet closer view.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE TEMPLE.

AMONG the many warm debates which divide the Churches, no doubt has ever been raised as to the site of Mount Moriah, the Temple hill. Bible, Talmud, Koran : Jewish Classics, early Fathers, Greek and Latin pilgrims : Pagans, Christians, Moslems : all scholars, all ecclesiastics, all worshippers, all enemies, declare that this grand open space, which the Arabs call Haram es Shereef, the sacred inclosure, was the Temple platform. It stood over against Olivet ; looking down on one side into the gardens of Ophel, on the other side into the graveyards of Jehoshaphat.

The Haram is about the size of St. James's Park within the rails ; much of it garden : a Syrian garden ; that is to say, a place in which there are some green clumps, a few flowering plants, a little wild grass, and a good deal of cypress and prickly pear. Near the centre of this great square stands a marble daïs, having Saracenic screens and colonnades of singular beauty ; from which daïs springs the Mosque of Omar, properly called the Dome of the Rock. South of this mosque lie the great fountains and tanks of water ; washing of hands and feet being part of both the Moslem and the Jewish religious rite. Round about the mosque stand many kiosks and altars. Yet a little farther south, on a lower level of the platform, rises the mosque el Aksa ; beneath and beyond which pile rest the mighty foundations by means of which Solomon and Herod had

levelled and enlarged the hill. The upper wall of the Haram is Saracenic art of the best period, having much of the solid picturesqueness seen in the walls of Granada and Seville; but the lower tiers of stone are of older date and more rugged strength. Saladin's sons tried to pull down the pyramids of Gizeh; a task as easy as any attempt to pluck out the stones from this temple wall.

On this great natural platform, levelled and enlarged by art, the Temple stood; not filling it, even with its outer courts and double colonnades; for the sacred buildings of the Jews were small when compared against an English abbey or a Roman church.

Every Hebrew pile, a house, a palace, a synagogue, a temple, was modelled on the outlines of a pastoral tent. A Jew was a man without art; one who could live without painting a picture, without modelling a bust, without striking a coin. Between Moses and Annas he had erected only two structures on which an Athenian would have deigned to smile—the two temples of Gerizim and Moriah; and these structures could pretend to no higher excellence than that of being pretty faithful copies in marble of a nomadic tent. A Hebrew of the golden age, whose eyes had not been dazzled by Greek and Babylonish architecture, had needed for his devotions no higher art. Driving their herds before them in search of grass, the tribes had carried the ark of the covenant through the desert in a tabernacle of the same form with their common tents; the only difference being that the work was finer, the materials costlier, the pillars made of brass, the rods of acacia wood, the fillets of silver, the roof of camel's hair drawn and dyed. The shape of their simple tabernacle was an oblong, ten yards wide and twenty yards deep; parted into two rooms of equal size by rich hangings; one room being the Holy of Holies, in which were placed the ark, the cherubim, and the mercy-seat; the other room being the Holy Place, in which were kept the candlestick, the altar of incense, and the table of shew-bread. These two chambers

differed in uses, though not in form. Into the Holy of Holies, no man, not even the priest, could enter, except on rare occasions. In that adytum God was supposed to dwell. Into the outer room, the Holy Place, the porch of which stood open to the sun, the priests could always go, but no one save a priest could pass the tabernacle door. The laity stood without. Around this sacred oblong, and of like shape with it, stretched a screen of cloth, fifty yards long by twenty-five yards broad ; enclosing a double square ; of which the upper end contained the tabernacle, while the lower end formed an open court before the sacred door. In this area, called the Court of the Priests, stood the altar for burnt offerings, also the bronze laver or basin in which the priests washed their hands and feet before entering into the Holy Place.

When Solomon built a stone temple, as a sign that Israel had ceased to be a wandering race, he erected a magnificent tent of marble ; larger in dimensions than the tabernacle of Gibeon and of Zion, and of the finest work that his power and riches could command. A double square, a Holy of Holies, a Holy Place, an outer court, a surrounding screen, were all produced in limestone and cedar ; also a second screen to enclose the first with an open space ; making a Court of the People around the original and more sacred Court of the Priests.

The second temple copied the first ; the third temple copied the second ; except that the outer work of Herod was larger in size, nobler in material, higher in art, than the structures which it replaced.

Herod, as you may still see from the glorious vaults and passages, visible beneath the Aksa, employed on his works the masons of Athens and Antioch. Indeed, it may be said of Herod's temple, as of Herod himself, that in outward face and polish it displayed far less of the Hebrew genius than of the Greek ; yet the core of his new edifice kept its original shape ; and the temple of Herod, like the Temple of Solomon, was a marble tent.

Deep in the heart of the mass of buildings on Moriah, on the highest level of the rock, the Temple proper, the tent or stone, had been raised by priestly hands. As the tread of any secular foot, whether of Jew or Greek, would have profaned the holy place, the Ionian builders were thrust aside from this inner range; enough for these heathens to labour on the gates, the colonnades, and the open courts. This sacred block was parted like the tabernacle into two grand chambers: the adytum, the Holy of Holies, a square room, in shape a cube; being ten yards in length, in breadth, and in height. This Holy of Holies stood to the west. In front of it, parted from it only by a veil or screen, was the naos, the holy place. As in the old tabernacle, the inner chamber was the dwelling of the Most High; a room now bare and empty, since the ark had been lost in the Babylonish war; yet not to be trodden, not to be seen, except on rarest occasions by mortal man. In the outer chamber, that lying to the east, stood the candlestick bearing seven lamps, perhaps to typify the seven planets; the table of shew-bread, with twelve loaves to represent the months; the altar of incense, having thirteen spices burning night and day, to signify that all the produce of the earth belongs to God. These ornaments were of gold. The veil which divided the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place was a curtain of finest work.

The true front of this edifice, facing towards the sunrise, stood high and square, having in the middle a great porch or opening like a Roman arch, before which hung a second veil; a magnificent curtain of rich Babylonian art, embroidered with blue and flax, scarlet and purple; colours which were meant to be a reflex and image of the world—the scarlet representing fire, the flax earth, the blue sky, the purple sea. No figures, no sculptures, as in Persian and Egyptian temples, adorned the front. Golden vines and clusters of grapes, the typical plant and fruit of Israel, ran along the wall, and the greater and lesser lights of heaven were wrought into the texture of the veil. The

whole façade was covered with plates of gold, which, when the sun shone upon them in the early day, sent back his rays with an added glory, so great that gazers standing on Olivet had to shade their eyes when turning towards the Temple mount.

Twelve steps led down from this platform of the Temple proper, to a second level, occupied by the Court of the Priests. Here stood the great bronze laver, the altar of burnt offerings built of unhewn stones, and a number of marble benches on which were laid the flesh of victims waiting to be burnt. Three flights of stairs led down from this court to a third level, occupied by the Court of the Israelites, sometimes called the Sanctuary. Here stood the chief edifices connected with the Temple ; houses of priests, offices, guard-room, with the Lishcath ha-Gazith, hall of the Sanhedrin. In this Court of the Israelites, facing the porch of the Holy Place, rose a magnificent gate of Corinthian brass, said to have been brought from Alexandria by Nicanor, and sometimes called by his name. It was of Greek design, and some persons believe it to have been that Beautiful Gate by which the lame man sat begging alms when Peter and John went up to pray. Other gates were of wood, but covered with either gold or silver leaf.

A third flight of stairs, fourteen in number, dropped to an outer court ; that of the cloisters, commonly called the Gentile Court, because, not being a part of the Temple, it was open to men of all nations, and had become a kind of sacred exchange and market-place. Here the brokers had their hhanoth, shops or stalls, at which the Jew from Galilee or Perea exchanged his drachm and stater for the sacred shekel ; the dove-seller kept his cotes for the accommodation of persons too poor to sacrifice a kid or lamb ; and the huckster who sold sheep and oxen for burnt offerings had his pens.

An open market, lying close to the altars, was a convenience to the stranger and to the priest : for as no money

could be offered in the Temple except sacred shekels, and as no dove or lamb could be slain unless it were of a certain age and breed, many a man might have left Jerusalem without offering his gift, had he not been able, through this arrangement of the dealers, to buy sacred coins and acceptable sacrifices near the Temple gate.

Such a market has its counterpart in almost every old city of East and West. In Cairo and in Stamboul, the outer court of a mosque is a market, where people may buy and sell, and into which any stranger who likes may come. Though a sacred coin is not now taken at the porch, nor a firstling of the flock burnt on the altar, yet the money-changers keep their stalls, the dealers sell sheep and oxen, and the poulterers have coops of pigeons in these markets of the mosque. So too in England, Italy, and France. It is only a little while ago that our fairs were commonly held in the churchyard; and in old cities, like Rouen and Aix-la-Chapelle, the market is still found in the very gateways of the church.

On this Court of the Gentiles, this market frequented by Greeks and Egyptians, Herod had exhausted the riches of his taste. The Holy of Holies had been left to the priests, who completed their task in about eighteen months; but the surrounding courts had occupied Herod himself for more than eight years; and the porticoes, colonnades, and stairs, with many of the halls, offices, and gates, had been left unfinished at his death. At first his son, afterwards the priests, carried on his ambitious work; not to enhance God's glory, but to foster human pride. Cloisters ran round the wall on the inner side, sustained on rows of columns exquisitely wrought, the capitals being ornamented with the acanthus and water-leaf, as in the famous Tower of the Winds. West, north, and east, these columns were in three rows; on the south they were in four. The floor made a shaded walk, like the colonnade in Venice, and the roof an open walk, like the gallery of Genoa. The pavement was inlaid with marbles of many colours. Leading into this

court from the city and the country were many noble gates ; one of those on the eastern side, facing the Mount of Olives, was called Solomon's Porch, and a second near by it was called the Beautiful Gate.

When the whole group of buildings—Temple, courts, halls, cloisters, terraces, and walls, were seen from a little distance—say, from the shoulder of Olivet, where the road winds round from Bethany—they had the appearance of a rough and sparkling pyramid ; the base being the line of foundation wall, the apex being the golden front of the Holy Place.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE GREAT COLLEGE.

CONNECTED and contrasted with the Temple as the seat of Jewish ritual, stood the Great College, the centre of Jewish thought. The Separatists considered this College as of higher authority than the Temple, and Simeon their Rector as a person of greater dignity than Annas the High Priest. There was a Temple faction and a College faction; the first consisting of the Sadducees, the second of the Pharisees; those treating the College as a thing of yesterday, as in truth it was; these asserting that a Jew might live, as he lived in Egypt and Babylon, without coming to Moriah with doves and rams, but that he could not observe the law without the assistance of learned men.

In the pious old days from Exodus to Exile, the Israelites had passed through a thousand years, a length of national life like that which parts the age of Victoria from that of Alfred, during which they were free from the necessities and temptations of a critical school. They read the law. They endured no doubts. So long as judges, priests, and kings had spoken the sacred language, they wanted no hermeneutical rules to tell them the plain intention of their sacred text. What sense could Nathan, could Micah, have put upon Hillel's seven canons? What need had Samson, Gideon, Saul, for definitions and refinements? They had the text itself. They read the law as a child would read it, taking it to mean precisely what it said. For those thou-

sand years, the spirit of Israel ran into poetry, wisdom, and prophecy ; as when David sang the psalms, when Solomon distilled the proverbs, when Isaiah wrote his odes and idyls. As yet, they had never heard of Mishna and Gemara ; but with the return from Babylon came a mighty change. Then the Covenant was lost, the ark of God was lost. New habits had been acquired ; and as their fathers yearned for the flesh-pots of Egypt, so the later Jews, brought back from Babylon to Jerusalem, pined after the schools and the arts which they had left behind.

This new state of mind had compelled their rulers to adopt new methods ; for Ezra in Judah, like Moses in Sinai, saw that he must educate the returning tribes afresh. The upper classes, those who had kept their learning, had been defiled by scepticism ; the lower classes, in losing their sacred idiom, had lost their religious fervour. To check the first of these evils, a great College had been founded in Jerusalem, for training young men of wealth and leisure in a truer knowledge of holy things. Lesser colleges flowed out of the Great College. With colleges came learning, with learning analysis, with analysis definition, with definition division into schools.

Of the Great College which inspired and guided the course of Jewish thought, the chief luminary had been Hillel, surnamed the Great. Hillel was a Babylonian Jew by birth, though in blood (on his mother's side, at least) he belonged, like Joseph of Bethlehem, to the royal line. Hence he was of kin to Mary and Jesus. Like Joseph, too, he was a craftsman in one of the noble trades. When he left the farther East for Syria, he was already forty years of age ; when he came to Jerusalem, and entered himself a student in the classes of Menachem the Essene and Shammai the Pharisee, he had to labour for his college fees and for his daily bread. He sat under Shemaja and Abtalion, called by Jews the proselytes ; that is to say, the children of men who had been converted to Judaism. Each of these eminent scholars had risen by his

virtues and learning to the high rank of Rector of the Great College.

In Herod's time, the Jewish schools were no longer free and open to all comers, as of old ; but were placed under State control, like the French and German universities in our time. A daily fee had to be paid on entrance ; not to the teachers, but to the official porters. This fee being high for a man who had to earn his bread by labour, one-half of Hillel's wages went to the doorkeepers of his school. When work was scant in his trade, the poor student, having no coin in his pouch, was thrust back by these porters from the college door ; but being resolute not to miss one of the lessons, he scaled the window outside, and screwing himself into a corner, listened to the teacher's discourse without paying his official fee. This fervour of application nearly cost him his life. For on one of his poor days, arriving at the class-room with a full head and an empty pocket, and being driven aside by the keepers, he betook himself as usual to the window ledge, where he soon forgot his poverty and situation in the lessons of the day. It was mid-winter ; snow on the ground, frost in the air ; and Hillel, numb and asleep, is said to have remained out all night, and to have been covered with snow to the depth of three hands. Early on the morrow, Shemaja and Abtalion entering the school-room, found it darkened by what they imagined to be a cloudy sky, but on the pupils rushing out, they discovered Hillel buried and insensible. In spite of its being a Sabbath day, when their law forbade them to light a fire, they carried him into the class-room, set him before a blazing heap of wood, and chafed his limbs until the blood returned to his lips, the animation to his frame. From that time the college students opened their eyes to his merits and his acquirements, and many of the younger men began to quote his sayings and to follow him as a guide.

Abtalion was then Rector of the Great College, and Judah and Joshua, sons of Bethyra, were the next in order of succession to the rectorial chair. But in a spirit of the

noblest sacrifice these learned men gave way before the claims of Hillel, and the poor Babylonian citizen was raised by the general voice to the rectorship of that college, of which he had lately been unable to pay the fees.

Under Hillel, the Great College of Jerusalem made a new start for fame ; but the fame which it acquired was of a critical and scholastic even more than of a religious kind. Hillel invented the seven rules. A thousand pupils entered his classes ; eighty of whom are said to have become famous as men of letters, doctors, and scribes. One of his pupils, Jonathan ben Uziel, is supposed by some critics to have translated the prophets into Chaldaic, the common language, for the benefit of Jews to whom Hebrew was become an unknown tongue.

In the Great College, Hillel found a rival not unworthy of his powers in Shammai, a Jew of immense learning and fiery zeal, who represented in the lecture-room the Pharisaic spirit in its more intemperate mood. Each master had his party, and the college became divided into the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai ; a moderate party and a fanatical party ; the pupils of which not only wrangled with each other in the classes and the synagogues, but drew swords upon each other in the streets and in the Temple courts. While Hillel leaned to the critical and religious side of a question, Shammai regarded it mainly from the practical and political side. Hillel was unworldly ; and he counselled his countrymen against taking up arms. Shammai was for the patriotic war, in the spirit of his teaching even more than in his actual phrase. One day, a battle was fought between these factions in the Temple court, which the Roman soldiers could not enter ; and many of Hillel's scholars were killed before the high priests could separate the combatants, by declaring that a voice from heaven had been heard to declare that both sides in this wicked fray were in the right. The luxurious Sadducees took Hillel's part against the mob, and though Shammai was able to count more partizans in the city, Hillel got the

upper hand in the schools. His influence was used in the cause of peace.

A main effort of Hillel's life was an attempt to reconcile the proud sect of the Sadducees to the common church; but in this main effort he failed. A minor attempt was made on the Essenes, whose pupil he had been, and in this he also failed. Yet his long life of a hundred and twenty years was in a high degree beneficial to his country, and when he died his followers expressed their love for him by electing his son Simeon to fill his place; an event which happened in the tenth year of our era, when their kinsman JESUS was about fourteen years of age.

JESUS may have seen Hillel; may have talked with him in the Temple, on that memorable visit to Jerusalem, when he surprised the doctors by his marvellous knowledge of the Mosaic Law.

Many of Hillel's sayings have a grace and beauty far beyond the teaching of his school—that of the moderate Pharisees. Three or four of these golden axioms may be quoted:

“Have no confidence in thyself until the day of death. . . Judge not thy neighbour until thou art in his position. . . . If I care not for my soul, who can care for me? . . . Love peace and pursue it. . . . Whoever exalts his name shall abase it. . . . Whatsoever thou wouldst like another to do to thee, do that to him: this is the whole law.”

Simeon succeeded his father in the Rectory of the College, and was still alive when Jesus began to preach. His son, Gamaliel, helped him in the duties of his chair; giving promise of a future not less brilliant than the founder of his house. Gamaliel was already the master of a school; the best scholar in Jerusalem; the settled successor to his father's seats in the Great College and in the Sanhedrin.

Among Gamaliel's pupils in the College there was a young man named Saul—Saul of Tarsus, afterwards St. Paul.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PURGING THE TEMPLE.

“JESUS went up to Jerusalem, and found in the Temple those that sold sheep and oxen, and doves, and the changers of money.” So writes St. John, an eye-witness of the scene which he describes. The feast of the Passover (unleavened bread) had been founded as a sign of the departure out of Egypt. On the night when the angel was to go round and slay the first-born of man and beast, each Hebrew had been told to choose either a lamb from the sheep or a kid from the goats ; a male of the first year, pure and without spot ; to kill it at sundown, striking the blood with a sprig of hyssop on his lintels ; to roast the kid or lamb whole before the fire ; when the night came down, to call in his household, both man and woman, each with his loins girt, his feet shod, his staff in hand, ready to begin the march ; and then to snatch up the meal of roast flesh, mixing it with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs. This feast of deliverance was to be kept for ever ; and from the times of Moses to those of Christ, the paschal lamb had been eaten in the same fashion. It had, however, become usual to slay the lamb in the Temple court, and to make a present in sacred money to the priest ; regulations which filled the Temple with an uproar of unseemly trades, and brought enormous profits to the sacerdotal class.

When JESUS and his five or six followers entered into the

Temple court, it would seem that the brokers had encroached upon those sacred precincts in which it was unlawful for them to buy and sell. A wall no higher than a man's breast, in which wall there were many openings, was the only separation between the Gentile court and the Israelite court; that is to say, between the open market for doves and shekels, and the Temple itself. These bounds could be easily broken by unscrupulous men.

From what we find done elsewhere in holy places, it is easy to see how the offence of carrying the traffic in doves, in sheep, and in sacred shekels, from the appointed market into the Temple courts must have come about. A thing for sale runs after the buyer, even into shrines and chapels; say, torches into a Greek church, and beads into the doorway of a mosque. But this habit of buying and selling on consecrated ground is not an evil of any one place or time. You may purchase candles and rosaries in almost every Latin church. In the churches of Asia you find a brisk trade in relics; in those of Italy and Spain there is a sharp demand for crosses and flowers. Yet the best illustration of this encroachment of secular upon sacred things lies nearer home, in no less solemn a place than our own St. Paul's. In the plays and pamphlets of the age of James the First, we see how the traffic had crept from the churchyard into the church, until the main aisle had become an open market, having goldsmiths' benches and hucksters' stalls, with mercers' bills on the columns, a crowd of people chaffering with cheap-jacks, and a litter of lap-dogs and poultry on the floor for sale. The same class of facts would be found in nearly every city of West and East. Shops still cling to the cathedral doors in Rouen. Booths encrust the venerable pile of Aix-la-Chapelle. The chief sook in Cairo is the Ghooreyeh, held under the windows of a mosque. In Jerusalem itself the markets are connected with holy sites; for the Moslem bazaar adjoins the Haram, a Frank fair is held under the Holy Sepulchre, and most of the things required by a pilgrim in his devotion—rosaries, torches,

candles, beads, and books—may be purchased within the Rotunda gates.

Now, in the ancient Temple, every Jew had a right to enforce the rules of public order and personal decorum, by driving any such dealers from the inner court into the proper market for such things as they had to sell—the Gentile court ; and in exercising this right of every citizen a man would be guilty of no offence against either the Temple regulations or the Roman law. These intruders into the sacred precincts must have been Jews, not Romans ; for a local rule, admitted by Pilate and promulgated by the high priest, prohibited strangers from entering into any part of the Temple courts. Had the offenders been Gentiles, a Jew could not have raised a whip against them without stirring up a riot, only to be quelled in blood ; but being natives of the soil, subject to their own police, they could be expelled from the sacred place without raising any question of municipal right.

JESUS snatched up some cords from the floor, and making a scourge of them, drove the traders from the Temple court, saying, “Take these things hence ; make not my Father’s house a house of merchandise.” But although a man might beat these dealers back again into the market-place without putting himself into Pilate’s hands, no one could perform such an act of piety and duty without attracting some notice from the elders, perhaps from the sagan, and the high priest. What kind of man was this, that took upon himself the office of Ezra and Hillel ? A prophet, a reformer, a chief priest, might presume, in a flooding of holy wrath, to redeem the Temple of God from this soil of forbidden trade. But who was this unknown purger of the court ? A crowd gathered round him ; such a crowd as would thicken round any stranger who should even now attempt to drive from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre the dealers in torches, candles, rosaries, and relics ; and as JESUS chased the butchers and money-changers from the Temple court, the people, following after him, cried out :

“What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?”

“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

They rejoined :—“Forty and six years was this Temple in building, and wilt thou rear it in three days?”

Such words as these were dark to the Pharisees ; for he spoke to them in parables, to the meaning of which they had no clue. A time would come when he might speak to their spirits, no less than to their ears ; and then they would carry him out to Golgotha and crucify him for the truth. But before that day could dawn, a work had to be done on earth, affecting its history to the end of time. The Church of God had to be founded in the human heart ; and until this work should be achieved, JESUS was content to watch and pray, to talk in parables, to excite inquiry, to announce himself by facts.

What hope had he from the priests and elders—from Sadducees who made a jest of the after-life, from Separatists who expected the advent of an earthly king ?

Yet there was a grand distinction between the two bodies holding sway in the Temple and the College : from the Sadducees he had nothing to hope and little to fear ; from the Pharisees he had nothing to hope but everything to fear. We see how much this must have been his case, not only from his words, which were sparing of the Sadducees, but from what is known of the laws of moral growth. A reformer's first battles are fought against reformers. Princes and prelates may hear of him in time, and they may act with rigour when they fancy that the public welfare is at stake ; but his early troubles will be almost sure to come from the men whose zeal he offends and whose followers he steals away. Fox was beaten by Brownists. Wesley suffered from the Moravians. Mormon chapels are disturbed by Ranters. An innovator in faith is mobbed by porters and colliers long before he falls into the clutches of Primates and Secretaries of State.

That which happens in other places happened in Jerusalem. Proud and unbelieving, the high priests and their party kept aloof from the popular politics of the city gate and the Temple court, while the common people, with the Scribes and doctors of the law, living in hope of a Messiah, were alert and curious as to every sign which might announce his coming reign.

Unhappily, the man who from his rank and learning might have helped to calm these excited spirits, Simeon, Rector of the Great College, was too old and frail for the duties of active life. Like his father Hillel, he was a man of gentle thoughts and gentle words ; a moderate Pharisee in his opinions, a moderate Essene in his way of living ; but the good old man was bowed to the earth with age. The date of his birth is not known ; but his father is said to have died at a hundred and twenty years ; and if Simeon were born when Hillel was fifty, he must must have been close upon ninety when JESUS began to preach. Two years after the crucifixion, Simeon went to his rest ; but during the years of Christ's ministry on earth, declining vigour rendered the chief person among the moderate Pharisees of little or no account in Jerusalem. In the schools, where his son Gamaliel stood in his place, his voice was still strong for good ; but in the council of Elders, in the debates on affairs, we miss Simeon altogether, and the rector exercises none of those active powers which his father Hillel had displayed before him, and his son Gamaliel was to exhibit after him. Years weighed him down, and though he bore the title of Prince, he seems to have left the judgment of offences to younger men.

To many of these priests and elders, the fact of JESUS being called a Nazarene would be crime enough ; for the great men of Jerusalem, whether Sadducees or Separatists, Sethians or Boëthusians, despised the Galileans as either rebels or aliens, either soldiers of Judas or worshippers of Jove.

Yet one member of the council, Nicodemus by name, a

rich man, a Pharisee, of kin to Simeon, came to see JESUS by night ; asking him if he were in truth that Son of God whom all the Pharisees expected, and, if he were so, what a man should do to be saved ?

JESUS told him that unless a man were born to a new life, he could never hope to see God.

A pupil of Hillel, hoping for a physical resurrection, Nicodemus could see no meaning in such words. How could a man be born a second time ? JESUS explained to him that the new life of which he spake was that of the spirit : that which is born of the flesh being flesh, while that which is born of the spirit is spirit. The great Pharisee was at fault ; for in that Oral Law which he conned in the college and quoted in the council, he found nothing whatever about this life of the spirit. JESUS said to him :

“ Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things ? ”

In truth the master knew no more than his pupils, to whom the scriptures had become a dead letter. Nicodemus left JESUS in wonder, not converted from his hermeneutical rules to a larger faith, yet touched, excited, rapt by the words of that midnight meeting. As one of the Sanhedrin, he saw that he might some day have to sit and judge this man ; he had heard enough to feel sure that, whether JESUS of Nazareth were the Christ or not, he was not a Galilean, not a follower of Judas of Gamala—one either to bring morals into danger, or excite people to revolt.

John was still preaching and baptizing in the wilderness of Judea ; at a place called *Ænon*, the Springs, near Salem, where there is said to have been much water. The wady Salem (in Arabic *Seleim*) lies about six miles from Zion, on the very spot where we should look for these new labours of John. Close to this Salem, in the wady Farah, we still find springs and pools ; a circumstance rare and notable in that sterile tract of land. Here, then, may have gushed those Springs, near Salem, at which John was preaching after the Passover, and to which JESUS went down from Jerusalem,

to see his cousin, accompanied by the five or six disciples whom he had now called into his church. Among the people whom he found with John at these Springs, were some Jews from the Temple, spies of the Sanhedrin, on account of whom he had to walk with a wary step. To go near John was to go into peril. As a great crowd came about him, the Pharisees, who had been sent down to watch, perceived that one who might prove to be a still more popular and seductive preacher of the law than John had come. At first they thought it might be well for them to set the old teacher against the new ; so going up to John they told him that the man whom he had baptized at Bethabara, was drawing the people away from him. But John, who knew his place in the new kingdom, said :

“ He that hath the bride is the bridegroom ; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice.”

No simile could have been more beautiful and true. In the drama of Syrian love and marriage the friend of the bridegroom plays a conspicuous part ; doing kindly, unselfish service ; yet earning no other reward than that of feeling how much he has added to the happiness of a man whom he loves. Sometimes this friend of the bridegroom has to select the bride. At all times he has to take the oaths of espousal, and to present the mohar, the bridal gift. For the virgin’s year, separating the act of betrothal from that of the bringing home, he is the only messenger between youth and maid. With many a laugh and jest, with many a sign and token, he has to pass from the unknown husband to the unknown wife ; watching over their common rights ; and feeding with his praises their mutual love ; for, during that virgin’s year, the husband, though he may possess much of a husband’s power, and may even put his wife to death for wrongs against his bed, is never allowed to see her face. His married joy and sorrow come to him only through his chosen friend. Until the day of bringing home, when the veil of the bride is to be lifted up, and with a cry of rapture

the husband is allowed to gaze into her eyes and kiss her on the mouth, the function of the bridegroom's friend knows no pause. Then the bridegroom's heart is glad, and the friend rejoices when he hears the bridegroom's voice.

When JESUS saw that the spies sent down to Salem were beginning to watch his doings and count his converts with a jealous eye, he left the Springs to his cousin John, going northward on his way back to Cana, in his own country of Galilee ; a province to which the arm of the Sanhedrin could scarcely reach.

He saw the Bridegroom's friend no more on earth.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SAMARIA.

FROM Jerusalem to Nazareth, by way of the hill towns of Shiloh, Sychar, Nain, and Endor, the distance, as a bird would fly, is about sixty-four miles, being nearly the same as that from Oxford to London. By the camel paths, and there are now no other, it is eighty miles. A good rider, having little baggage and less curiosity, may get over the ground in two long days. To do so, however, he must make up his mind to spend twelve hours each day in the saddle, on stony hill-sides, with very little water, and still less shade, under the blazing light of a Syrian sun. An easy journey, with time to rest and read, to see the wells, ruins, and cities on the route, may be made in four days ; though better still in five. It is well to carry your tent.

The Lord and his disciples went through the land on foot ; resting by the wells, under the shade of fig trees, in the caves of rocks.

The first part of this journey, a ride of thirty-six miles from the Damascus gate, to be done in about twelve hours, brings you to one of the most lovely and attractive spots in Palestine—the site of Joseph's tomb and Jacob's well, where JESUS, resting from his long walk, begged the woman of Samaria to give him drink. This well is now a mere hollow basin on the slope ; for the early Christians built a church over it, to preserve it from decay, and the roof and walls of this early church have fallen into the shaft and

filled it up. Broken columns, masses of cornice, and mounds of portico, lie heaped about ; but the well itself remains perfect as when the servants of Jacob pierced it in the rock : a round shaft, nine feet wide, cut through the solid limestone to a depth of more than a hundred feet ; the side being hewn and smooth. Clear away the ruins of that early church, and you might have the well very nearly in the state in which our Saviour saw it ; with the little strips of corn-fields waving green, the white tomb of Joseph near by, the light patches of olive ground here and there, and a little way off, the city on the hill-side. A low wall, to keep cattle and children from falling in, stood about the well ; and on this low wall of stone JESUS sat down to rest, while his disciples went up into the town of Sychar, to the house of some orthodox baker, to buy Jewish bread.

Sychar would seem to have been a small open town near Shechem, one of the chief cities of Samaria. This fact is distinctly stated by Eusebius, who says it stood to the west of Shechem, and therefore between the city and the well. The same fact is implied in the language used by St. John. Shechem was an older city than Jerusalem, and the most envious of Jews would have admitted its right to stand next in rank to his own holy place. Its name had not been changed in the time of Stephen, for St. Luke makes that martyr mention the great Samaritan city by the name of Sychem, the Hellenic form of Shechem. St. John could not be talking of this proud and ancient place when he mentions the unknown name of Sychar. If a Jew knew anything at all about his country and his faith, he would certainly know the name of Shechem, the head-quarters of a hostile sect ; just as every Arab is sure to know the name of Tehran, every Anglican that of Rome. Again : the Lord is said to have stayed two days at Sychar. It is in the last degree unlikely that he would have stayed two days in Shechem ; or even that he should have entered within its gates ; seeing that in his whole life he is not known to have slept one night within a city wall. Though he lived only

four miles from Sephoris, he is not said to have gone inside its gates. He is never mentioned as going into Tiberias. If he went near to Tyre and Sidon, to Julius and Cæsarea Philippi, he does not appear to have gone into their streets. He must often have passed by Hippos, Pella, and Gadara ; yet he appears to have shunned all closer knowledge of them. When he went up to Jerusalem to the festivals, he left the city at sundown, sleeping for the night on Olivet or in Bethany. He loved the open country, the free hill-side, the lowly hamlet, the consoling well. If he stayed at Sychar two days, Sychar must have been an open place, like Cana, Bethany, and Capernaum ; not a great city like Shechem with gates and walls. And again : Sychar lay near to the well, which Shechem did not. Shechem, now Nabulus, as the Arabs call that Neapolis which Vespasian either built or repaired on the ancient ground, is nearly two miles from Jacob's Well. Sychar could be seen from the well, Shechem could not.

A heap of stones and dirt stands on the slope in the very spot where we should look for Sychar ; which heap is thought by some to be the dust of a part of Shechem, once a much larger city than Nabulus is now. It is likely that this dust may be the ruin of that very town of Sychar in which JESUS spent two days, founding the Samaritan branch of his holy church.

These two bold hills, through the parting of which the road from Jerusalem to Nazareth cleaves its way, are Ebal and Gerizim ; Ebal on the left hand, Gerizim on the right. On the right slope, among rushing waters, olive grounds, and palms, stands the Mohammedan town of Nabulus ; now, as in the time of JESUS, the holy city of the Samaritans, head-quarters of the Samaritan rite ; and now, as it has been from the days of Joshua, a place of blessing and cursing—of religious hatred and sacerdotal strife. Nabulus is still what Shechem was—a city disputing with Jerusalem the credit of being the most holy, the most turbulent, the most filthy city on the earth.

In going from Salem to Cana, a Jew in the days of Pilate would generally have taken the lower road by the Jordan valley, so as to avoid passing through Samaria; partly because the track along that great road was easier and safer for men travelling on foot; still more, because a Samaritan and a Jew abhorred each other like brethren who have fallen from love into hate; most of all because the Traditions of his Elders told him that to eat from any dish, to drink out of any pitcher, to sit on any rug or stool, to use any staff or saddle, which a Samaritan had touched, would render him unclean.

Unclean! This word Unclean was then a word of terror to the strongest minds. It is hard to convey in English phrases and to English ears a notion of the appalling force with which it struck a Jew. To be smitten by plague is a horror that we can grasp; for the plague has rioted in our cities, emptying our streets, and routing from our homes the charities of life; but plague itself only wastes the body, leaving the soul untouched. To gain some idea of what uncleanness must have been to a Jew, we must add to the miseries caused by infection of plague the penalties implied in an excommunication from the Church. An unclean Jew was thrown beyond the pale of law. He could not go about a town; he could not enter into another man's house; he could not eat with his friends; he could neither kiss his wife nor fondle his child. Still less could he enter into the synagogue, into the Temple court. A civilian, he was driven from society; a soldier, he was thrust from the camp. So long as a Jew remained unclean—a week, a year, a whole life it might be—he had no right to any place in Israel. He was put aside as a leper and a thing accursed. Losses of every kind attended his unhappy state; loss of time, of money, of pleasure, of respect; he was forced to dwell alone, imprisoned in his house or tent, compelled to wash his clothes, to break his polluted vessels, to make offerings of purifications to the priests. In short, an unclean Jew was treated as an outcast from society and from God.

Now, a man might possibly have walked from Salem to Cana, going through the heart of Samaria, without touching any vessel which a native of the soil had used ; but such a journey would have been hard for a man without camels and servants to undertake. A poor man could not carry with him everything he would want on the road ; for bread will grow stale, and meat will become foul. A man trudging on foot must live on the country through which he goes ; though the halter at an inn, the pitcher at a well, the saddle on an ass, would prove to a Jew in Samaria equally unclean. Bread which had been baked, wine which had been pressed, water which had been drawn, by a native, were forbidden things.

Yet JESUS chose that he and his disciples should march from Salem to Cana by the mountain roads. A part of his work had to be done in Samaria ; for he had to offer the brethren of Samaria salvation, and to wean the founders of his Church from their dread of offending against the Oral Law.

Arrived at Jacob's Well, JESUS sent his disciples into Sychar to buy bread ; and while they were gone away, being seated on the rim of the well, resting in the heat of noon, for the time was about the sixth hour, he saw a woman of the place come out from Sychar to draw water, and he spoke to her, saying :

“Give me to drink.”

The woman stood aghast ; not at being asked for water, for a Syrian woman gives drink to any one on the wayside, freely as Rebekah held her pitcher to the lips of Eliezer ; but at such a request being made to her by a Jew ; for she knew that the great doctors in Jerusalem had forbidden Jews to have any dealings with Samaritans ; either to buy food or drink from them, to touch anything which they had polluted, or even to exchange with them a word of greeting.

It is held to be one of the notes of a true church, that a

false church shall spring up beside it ; as a medal must have a reverse, and a north pole a south. And this is always true in fact. Every creed has its own story ; but the natural features of each story, that is to say, the features which depend on human nature and human law, are everywhere the same. The schisms of the Temple have been repeated in the church and in the mosque ; the Samaritan and the Jew being no other than the Greek and Latin, the Sunnee and Shyah, of the chosen race. But how was a polite Greek, a busy Roman, to comprehend the quarrels of these Hebrew sects ? One man worshipped Jehovah on Mount Moriah ; a second worshipped the same Jehovah on Mount Gerizim ; and this difference of locality was the only difference between a Jew of Jerusalem and a Jew of Shechem either visible or intelligible to a Roman prince. We do not easily adopt the nice distinctions of other people. No Goth ever comprehended the party cries which rent the Hippodrome. A Sicilian would be puzzled by our doctrine of prevenient grace. An Arab does not easily perceive the gulf which separates a Latin from a Greek mass. Suraya is not less perplexed by the policy of Frank and Russ in Palestine than was Pilate by the quarrels of Samaritan and Jew. We understand the matter in some degree now, for the story of Samaria is better known to a Christian child than it was to a Roman senator.

After the first division of Israel into two kingdoms, Shechem became the religious capital of the Ten tribes ; the city being older in their history, more precious in their association, than Jerusalem. It was here that Abraham had pitched his tent when God led him out of Hauran. It was here that Jacob had bought the field from Hamor, and that his servants had sunk the famous well. It was here that Joseph had lived in his father's tent, and hither his bones had been brought from his regal sepulchre on the Nile. It was here that Levi and Simeon had avenged their sister's shame. On the return from Egypt, this city had been given to the

Levites, the tribe of priests, who had made it a sanctuary, a refuge, and a holy place. It was here, between the two peaks of Ebal and Gerizim, that Moses had commanded the Law to be proclaimed afresh ; so that Gerizim had become the second Sinai, the final Mount of God. Hither, consequently, Joshua, in his old age, had called the tribes together ; and here the hosts of Israel had heard the last words of their Great Captain, when he put to them that question—"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve?" adding for himself : "As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Cradled in these gracious associations, Shechem enjoyed the repute of an ancient and holy place five hundred years before Jerusalem became a Hebrew town, and many of the tribes objected to the capital being pitched on a desolate rock, in a distant corner of the state. Thus, Shechem was the city of Joshua and the Judges, Zion that of David and the Kings. Shechem was Moscow, Jerusalem was only St. Petersburg. Old memories and associations clung about it ; the grace, the poetry, the spell of an heroic time, which no material grandeur could impart to its rival in the south. As a Muscovite prince is not owned as Czar until he has been crowned in the Kremlin, so it seemed to Rehoboam that his power in Israel would lack a final grace unless he went down from the new city of Judah to the ancient city of Ephraim, to be there made king.

That going down to Shechem had been his ruin. Proud of his descent, vain of his power, the young King had threatened and alarmed the haughtiest of the tribes. Ephraim had never been reconciled to the line of David, for that powerful tribe disputed the ascendancy with Judah ; and could not brook to see king after king ascending the throne from a rival house. So when Rehoboam threatened the men of Shechem, the people turned away from their king, stoned his officer to death, and raised Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, one of their own tribe, to a separate throne. Benja-

min had gone with Judah, its mighty neighbour, but the other nine tribes had followed the fortunes of Ephraim ; the Kingdom of David being parted into two grand fragments ; never to unite again, until welded for a few brief years in the strength of Herod the Great.

But long before that event the royal Ephraim had sunk into the despised Samaria.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

JACOB'S WELL.

HOLDING in their possession the soil of Ephraim, the holy city, and the famous well, the people of Samaria seemed to have some grounds for their boast of being the descendants of Joseph, the wisest of the twelve sons of Jacob. The Jews of Jerusalem answered such claims to high rank and pure blood, with an assertion that every living man of the Ten Tribes had been lost when the people were carried off captive into Persia and Assyria by Shalmaneser ; that Esar-haddon, seeing the land of Samaria rich and fruitful, had brought into it a colony of Syrians ; that Alexander the Great had poured a flood of Greeks into this province, as well as into the neighbouring Galilee ; that all those strangers from the Tigris and Eurotas had introduced into the land their gods of brass and stone, Baal and Ashtoreth, Zeus and Aphrodite ; so that the people who had come to possess the soil of Ephraim were a mixture of heathen races, aliens in blood, in language, and in creed, to the actual Jews. All these assertions were in one sense true ; for the tribes had certainly been swept away ; their places had been filled by strangers ; but then it is well known, from the history of war in many countries, that no invasion and no captivity ever clears the soil of its cultivators. Many persons remain, and many come back. A sweeping raid may empty a town ; but the open country defies this doom. A brake, a cave, a mountain, a glen, a

forest, known to the native, unknown to his foe, may serve as a refuge in the hour of flight ; and when the rage of victory is spent, and the season for repeopling the soil returns, it is the interest of all new comers into the land that some of the old inhabitants should come back, if only to assist in finding the wells and clearing the waste. So it always happens that a remnant, more or less large, of an ancient race remains ; and that such was the case in Ephraim is clear, as otherwise both the old language and the old creed must have perished from the land.

The Greek and Syrian colonists had in time been won to the local faith ; an easy thing on their side, for men who believe in the religion of nature yield to a local god as readily as to a change of climate ; but then this change of creed in the new comer implies the continued presence on the soil of a people possessing a local god.

The descendants of these Syro-Hellenic Jews, taking wives from the Ephraimites still dwelling in the land, formed the upper classes in Samaria, the priests, the nobles, the professional men ; a people of bright, urbane, and plastic genius, fond of art and architecture ; servants of Jehovah, because they thought Him the god of their new territory ; but also mindful that other countries possess other deities, and that their fathers had worshipped Bel and Zeus, in Babylon and Greece. In becoming Jews, these Samaritan colonists had not ceased to be Gentiles ; and with many of them, the only change in their religious condition was this—they had placed a new god in their Pantheon.

Of course the strict Jews of Judea contemned these Pagan Jews of Samaria as men unworthy to join in the Temple rites ; and the Samaritans, finding that the High Priests, rejecting them as Jews, forbade them to enter the Temple courts, built for themselves a new temple on Gerizim, the Mount of God. From that time forward, the feuds of Shechem and Moriah became hot as those between Rome and London after the bull of Paul the Third and the consolidation of the English church.

In the age of JESUS, a Samaritan laughed at a Separatist Jew as a narrow bigot ; the Jew replying that a Shechemite was an outcast from society, a stranger to the one true God. Each, in his own heart, assumed himself to be the salt of the earth ; the only righteous under heaven. Each boasted of possessing the purer blood, and the older law. On the side of the Samaritan it was urged that he descended, through the proud line of Ephraim, from Joseph and Rachel, and that his seat on Gerizim had been chosen by Moses, as the sacred spot from which a new publication of the Law should be made. On behalf of the Jew it was answered, that while his own descent from Judah was certain, a Samaritan could bring no proof of his descent from Ephraim ; that on the contrary there was reason to believe him a mere alien in the land, offspring of a rabble of Greek and Syrian parents ; a man who only claimed to be a Jew when he could gain by the fraud, and was eager to be thought a Greek, or even a Sidonian, when he had a purpose to serve by an additional fraud. On the part of this Jew it could be also said, with truth and with effect, that if the Samaritan had built a temple to Jehovah on Mount Gerizim, he had been ready, in the hour of persecution, when the faith of men is tried, to deny his allegiance to God, and to dedicate this temple of Jehovah to either Jupiter or Bel.

A history of the relations of Rome and London in the darkest times would be no unfair reflex of affairs between Zion and Shechem. Like the anathema launched against England from the steps of St. Peter's, a public curse was thundered against Gerizim from the Temple stairs. In the Hebrew courts of law a Samaritan's oath was not taken. No Samaritan could give evidence against a Jew. It was an offence for a Jew to greet, or even to approach, a member of this polluting sect. To eat at his board, to sleep under his roof, to drink from the same jar, to handle anything which he had defiled by his touch, was to become ceremonially unclean. A Samaritan was beyond the reach of grace ; according to the Separatist doctors, he could not

be received into communion with the Jews as a convert to a purer faith. He stood condemned by the voice of the Sanhedrin to remain for ever an outlaw and an outcast.

Such, in the eyes of an orthodox and Separatist Jew, were the men of Sychar, this little town near the Well ; and such was the woman, otherwise light of character and glib of tongue, of whom the Lord, seating himself on the stone, requested a drink of water to cool his thirst. To touch that pitcher in her hand would have rendered a Jew unclean. Well, therefore, might the woman say archly :

“How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria ? Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.”

Few printed words have the beauty and the fulness of what ensues. JESUS said to the woman, in the bright vein of all his sayings :

“If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee ‘Give me drink,’ thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”

She answered lightly :

“Rabbi, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Whence then hast thou that living water ? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well ?”

To this the Lord replied :

“Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again ; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall thirst no more for ever ; but the water which I shall give shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Still in her Samaritan mood, the woman spake :

“Rabbi, give me this water, that I shall thirst no more, nor come hither to draw.”

JESUS said : “Go ; call thy husband, and come hither.” It was a test saying, to which the light creature answered : “I have no husband.” JESUS added : “Thou hast well said, I have no husband : for thou hast had five husbands,

and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband : in that thou hast spoken truth."

Now she stood abashed ; her life was opened to the gaze—her sin made known to a stranger and a Jew.

" Rabbi, I percieve thou art a prophet."

Some of the dialogue here is manifestly lost. Afterwards she added : " Our fathers worshipped in this mountain "—(in the temple on Gerizim)—" and ye say "—(the Jews say)—" that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

" Woman," said the Lord, " believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what : we know what we worship : for salvation is of the Jews ; but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. . . God is a spirit ; and they that worship, must worship in spirit and in truth,"

And then to this poor sinner, this outcast from the Law, He made the first announcement that he was the Christ. When she spoke of her belief that a deliverer was then about to appear in the flesh—a belief which the Samaritans held in common with the Jews—saying :

" I know that the Messiah cometh," JESUS answered her :

" I that speak unto thee am He."

When the disciples, coming back from Sychar with the bread which they had bought, found him talking with the woman at the Well, they were sore and grieved, for they were simple Jews, brought up from childhood to abhor these sons and daughters of schism, and fearful lest by touching the cord, the pitcher, or the woman's dress, he should have made himself unclean. Only their great love for him prevented them from breaking into open wrath ; yet this hesitation of complaint was a sign that they were already learning to see with his eyes, although as yet they could not help wondering at much of what they saw and heard.

Laying the dinner of bread and fruit on the stone, they begged that he would eat.

“I have meat to eat that ye know not of.”

Taking his words in the literal sense, they turned to each other and said—“Hath any man brought him ought to eat?” In other words—Has any one given him unlawful food—bread baked by a Samaritan? Knowing what they said among themselves, he replied to their query with a hint that his church was to include the men of Samaria no less than those of Galilee and Judea :

“My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work.”

They urged no more. They were beginning to see that whatever he chose to do was right ; so they stayed two days with the men of Sychar, teaching these outcasts and schismatics the way of life ; and then they set out on their journey to Cana, in Galilee, where the family of their Lord still dwelt.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SEA OF GENNESARETH.

PASSING through the hills of Samaria and over the chain of Mount Carmel into Galilee, where he might hope to pursue his work in peace, JESUS came through Nazareth to Cana, the little town of gardens and plantations, of herds-men and vine-growers, in which he had changed the water into wine. Here, his fame lay in wait for him ; in the person of a noble Jew, an officer of state, and a member of Herod's court. Having a son lying sick to the point of death, this noble Jew had come up from his house at Capernaum on the lake to Cana, that he might see the Master whose name was now noised abroad, and beg him to go down with him to the Lake Country and restore his son.

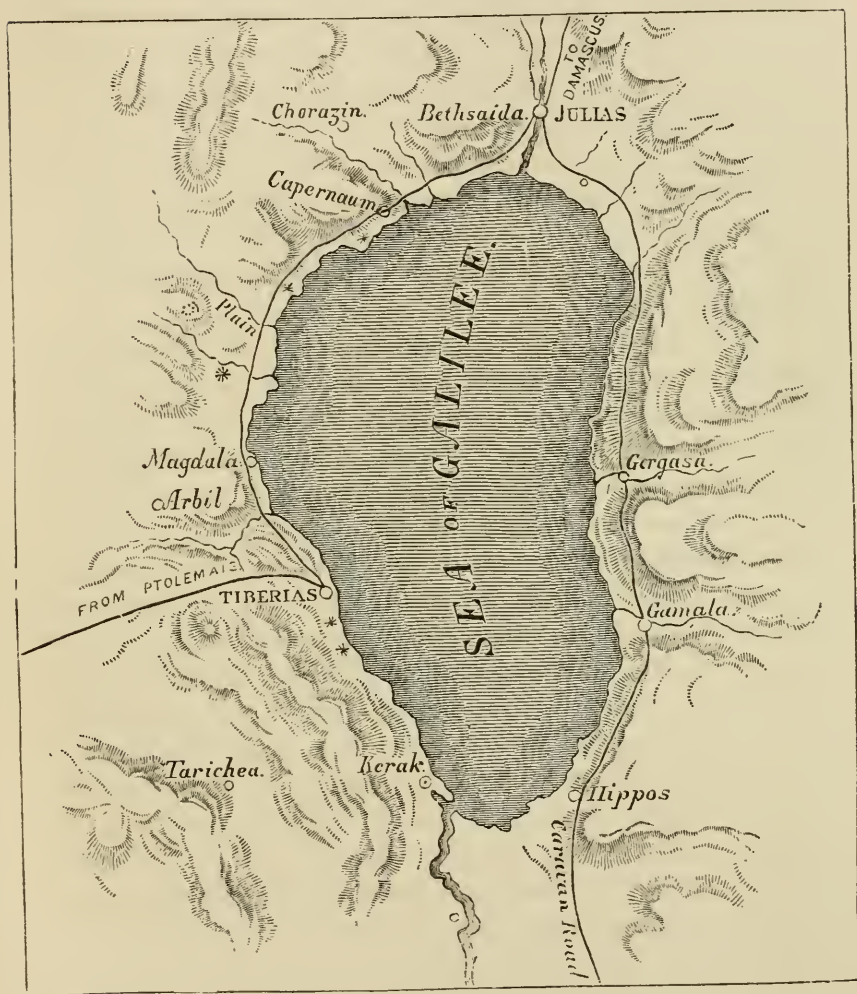
JESUS having pity on the father, said to him :

“Go thy way ; thy son liveth.”

And from that hour, being one past noon, the young man at Capernaum, twenty-six miles from Cana, began to mend. Going back again down the wady, the great officer met his servants coming up with their joyful news ; and thus it came to pass, that in the early days of his calling, the fame of JESUS, as a man having power over life and death, became noised about in the Lake Country, not only in vineyards and fishermen's sheds, but in the ante-rooms of Herod's palace.

Some thirty miles from Nazareth, in a deep and narrow

scoop, lay that inland sea of Gennesareth on the shores of which JESUS was to spend so many of his later days ; a small and lovely lake, the Zug of Palestine, wrapt in the arms of a circle of tiny Alps, and fed by a confluence of



SEA OF GALILEE.

streams and falls. In summer its surface was six hundred feet below the level of Acre bay. The water was fresh and wholesome ; sweet to the lips of man and beast ; and when

judged in relation to the latitude and level, it was extremely cool. Placed in a jar and left in the open air, it became cold as those artificial snows with which the people on its banks were in the habit of cooling their food and drink. Jews who had lived in Egypt and Italy spoke of this coolness of the lake of Galilee as one of the miracles of nature ; and one that a man must have been born a Syrian fully to appreciate and enjoy. One result of this freshness in the lake was the beautiful and contrasting foliage on its banks ; for the sun being hot and the water cold, many trees and plants which are commonly strangers to each other, such as the Caspian walnut, the Syrian fig, and the Nilotic palm, were found growing in clumps in the gardens of its sunny shores.

The lake was about thirteen miles long by seven miles broad ; in shape a fig, the lower end being to the south. Fish were abundant and of many kinds. The depth of water varied with the time of year ; being highest after rain in October ; but having draught enough, even in the dry months of summer, to float Roman ships of war.

In the region lying west of this lake, the hills were easy in ascent and almost green in tint ; though they rose higher and barer as they rolled up towards Hattin and Tabor, the two main pinnacles of this mountain range. Beyond the lake, on the eastern bank, the ascent was bolder, the verdure less abundant, the rock more shelving and abrupt. Indeed, the inheritance of Manasseh, lying east of the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee, was a wild and difficult land ; a mountainous desert, with a few rapid torrents, some bare tracts of upland, and above these deserts a camp-like range of inaccessible peaks.

Nature had invited man by her own true signs to dwell on the western banks of this lake, where she had smoothed her gentle slopes and hidden her refreshing springs. A town here, a city there, had been built on the farther shore ; such as that hamlet of Gerasa, in which JESUS cast out the two devils ; and such as those Greek cities of Hippos and

Gamala, which achieved a mournful celebrity in the Roman wars. But on the Galilean bank, the bright little towns and villages crowded upon each other, as in our own day villas and hamlets sparkle around the shores of Como and Geneva. On every patch of loam, in every rift of rock, on every gentle knoll, sprung a cluster of stone sheds, the homes of reapers and fishermen ; each hamlet having its bit of uneven corn-field, its narrow ledge of vines, and its tiny beach of sand. Some of the neighbouring peaks being volcanic, huge masses of basaltic rock lay tumbled along the shore, especially towards Capernaum. Of course, a broad marsh surrounded the Jordan where it flowed into the lake. The chief tree in this landscape was the palm.

Every two or three miles along the beach lay one of these sparkling towns ; here, Magdala, the abode of that Mary who has lent her name to repenting women of all nations ; there, Capernaum, the home of that noble Jew whose son was saved from death ; yonder, Chorazin, the scene of unwritten histories ; and here, again, Bethsaida, the river-town from which Jona removed his sons to a new home.

Bethsaida, a fishing place, as the name implies, stood on the Jordan, a little way above the marsh, at the nearest point where the river could be crossed. Some of its houses were in Naphthali, some in Manasseh ; one who wrote for Greek readers would have described them as being partly in Galilee, the province of Antipas, and partly in Gaulonitis, the province of Philip : the two halves of the village being joined by a bridge. The little town had become a city ; a station on a great highway ; for on the Romans occupying Syria in strength, they had brought the road from Ptolemais to Damascus, which they carried through Sephoris to the lake, along the water to Capernaum, and thence along the edge of the Jordan marshes to Bethsaida, where it crossed the stream. Philip had built streets, walls, palaces, gates, about the Roman bridge ; calling his new city Julias, from the name of Cæsar's daughter ; for like his father, Philip was both a great builder and a great courtier ; and in hope

of winning friends in Rome he adorned his young city with an imperial name. The country people still called the clump of houses standing west of the river, Bethsaida, and the only change they would make on the other side was to call the new Greek city Bethsaida-Julias.

Other Greek cities lay along the southern shores of the lake : Hippos, Gamala, Pella ; all these being places of the stranger, not of the Arab and the Jew.

West of the lake, nearly facing Gerasa, and about four miles south of Magdala, Antipas Herod was building a new city to outshine Julius, built by his brother Philip ; which city he proposed to call Tiberias, and make the usual residence of his court. His plan was laid at the base of a steep hill, around the waters of a hot spring, among the ruins of a nameless town and the graves of a forgotten race. A great builder, like all the princes of his line, Antipas could now indulge his taste for temples, palaces, and public baths, conceived in a Roman spirit and executed on a Roman scale, while flattering that capricious master who might any day send him to die as his brother was dying in a distant land. The new city grew apace. A castle crowned the hill. High walls ran down from the heights into the sea. Streets and temples covered the low ground which lay between these walls. A gorgeous palace rose high above the rest of these public works ; a palace for the prince and court, having a roof of gold, from which circumstance it came to be known as the Golden house. A port was formed ; a pier thrown out ; a water-gate built ; and a fleet of war ships and pleasure boats danced on the sparkling wave. Towers protected, and gates adorned, a city which Antipas dedicated to his master, inscribed on his coins, and made the capital of his province, the residence of his court.

To people the empty streets which he had built, he lured men of condition from every part of Galilee, and even from Italy and Greece. He fetched the craftsmen from Sephoris, the artists from Ptolemais ; he declared Tiberias a free city, an asylum for the unclean, a refuge for the poor, a home for

the persecuted, of all sects and nations ; he bought slaves from captains who had taken them in war ; and he gave freedom to these slaves on the easy condition of their settling in a healthy and prosperous town, where work was abundant and amusement cheap. For some persons he built houses, to others he gave land. He let every man see that the short way into his favour was to aid him in these plans. And every one helped him. His friends, his captains, his great officers of state, built palaces on the little bay. Houses swarmed up the hill-side, and the whole space within the walls, even that part of it which lay among the ancient cemeteries, was soon occupied by dwellings, temples, palaces, and shrines.

Tiberias had the usual aspects of a Greek city ; which may be figured as those of a Syrian Baïæ, a Syrian Pompeii. There was a Roman forum, a public square in which the people met. There was a regal palace—the Golden house. There was a stadium, in which the youth of Galilee, contrary to Jewish customs, braced their limbs with Spartan exercises and proved their skill in Olympic games. There was a theatre for the performance of Roman comedies. There was a palace for the public treasury, another for the public archives. There was a mint which produced a series of noble coins. There was a vast barrack for the troops. The Golden house, the pride and glory of Herod's court, displayed the usual ornaments of a Roman palace : eagles, lions, horses ; busts of the imperial race and statues of the Roman gods.

This city was waxing great and famous. When the first stones were being laid near the sea, St. John was a little child playing on the beach at Capernaum with his father's nets ; yet so swift was its growth, so wide its fame, that before he composed his gospel, Tiberias had given its name to the waters on which it stood, like Geneva to Lake Lemán, and Lucerne to that of the Four Cantons. When St. Matthew wrote his gospel, the city was still young, and a Jew of Galilee might speak of the lake as Gennesareth ; forty

or fifty years later, a man who was born on its shores and had fished in its waters, spoke of the lake most familiarly by its Roman name.

This new city, though ruled by a Jewish prince, and seated in the midst of Pharisaic hamlets, was in no sense a Jewish town. It was a Syrian Syracuse; a city of pleasure, of refuge, of intelligence, of toleration, and of force; in which all the strangers of the earth could assemble in peace and safety, bringing with them, as into an open market and a common forum, their speech, their customs, and their idols. In fact, under the Herodian prince, the city of Tiberias was a Roman fortress, held by a Syro-Macedonian army, and governed by an Asiatic court.

For the Tetrarch of Galilee, though he still sat in the synagogue, joined in the shema, and went up to the Temple feasts, was hardly esteemed a Jew. But of all his offences in a Pharisee's eyes, the crowning act of impiety was his employment of Ionian artists in adorning the Golden house. "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image," said the Law, in one of its indisputable texts; and many a Jew, who preserved no other virtue of his fathers, still held fast by the Mosaic scorn of marble and brazen gods. This antique scorn of idols a Pharisee poured out upon those lions, centaurs, nymphs, and fawns, in which the sculptors of Antioch and Alexandria found the favourite figures of their art. The Galilean, who called no man lord, held all such images in loathing, and neither the Elder in Jerusalem nor the peasant on the lake could excuse the appearance of these Pagan abominations in the Golden house.

CHAPTER XL.

IN THE LAKE COUNTRY.

GOING down from Cana into the Lake Country, from which many of his disciples came, and in which his fame was now ripening, JESUS went about the small towns and hamlets—Capernaum, Chorazin, Magdala, Bethsaida, Dalmanutha, Gerasa—preaching in the synagogues, visiting the fishing boats and threshing floors, healing the sick and comforting the poor; gentle in his aspect and in his life; wise as a sage and simple as a child; winning people to his views by the charm of his manner and the beauty of his sayings; but keeping locked in his own heart the great secret that he was Lord and Christ. He could speak in facts, but not in words, while the foundations of his Church were being slowly laid in the souls of men.

No Pharisee, no Galilean, could as yet have understood him, any more than Nicodemus understood him, when he spoke of a new spirit, of a new birth, of a kingdom higher than the earth. Their hopes were in the flesh. These Separatist Jews believed in an after-life; but an after-life of the body. They dreamed of a Messianic empire, the seat of which was to be on Zion and the ruler a Jewish prince. Beyond this hope of a physical heaven, with a throne of ivory and a crown of gold for their Deliverer, they had not risen, and of themselves they would never rise. To tell these men, in their eager mood, that he was Lord and Christ, would have had the effect of throwing them into dangerous

ferments, probably into acts of war. Many were armed; all were ready for the fray. At a word, the torch would have been lighted, the sword would have been drawn; and scenes like those which had darkened the rising of Judas of Gamala and the revolt of Simon the slave might have been repeated in every town of Galilee. The Galileans could not be trusted with a truth for which they were unprepared. Not by sword and fire was the heavenly kingdom to be reproduced on earth, but by changes in the spirit of man unrecognized in their Separatist system and repugnant to their national pride.

The true change was a work requiring time and care. Two or three hearts were first to be won; then a few others were to be called in to share the work. The faith of these chosen servants was to be fixed and fired, so as not to depend on the Master's presence. When this had been done, the crowd would have become a church, having its own methods of procedure, and its own principles of life. Thousands, millions might then be added; these were but points of detail and of labour. The great thing was to found the spiritual kingdom in a few earnest hearts.

Had JESUS, in this early stage of his divine ministry, announced himself as the Son of God, the Pharisees would have been bound either to proclaim him King or stone him in the streets. And not finding him to be the King they wanted, they would assuredly have judged him an impostor and put him to death.

Sometimes on foot, sometimes by boat, he went round the Lake Country; visiting Magdala, Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Gerasa; drawing many people after him, no less by the beauty of his sermons, than by his readiness to do good. He entered into poor men's houses. He spoke kindly to women. He called to him little children. He sat down at table with the despised of men. Into every place he brought glad tidings; eating and drinking with his people, and spreading around himself an atmosphere of joy. But in these travels round the lake, he refrained, like an

Arab of the desert, from entering into the great cities and abiding in any place girt with walls. With Hippos, Pella, and Gadara, he must have been acquainted, as he often passed under the shadow of their towers ; but he is never said to have entered within their gates. For many months he lived within sight of Tiberias, and drew many of his hearers from that city ; yet the gospels are silent as to his ever having seen the Golden house.

This avoidance of the new city, the capital and court of Herod, may have sprung from many causes, though a desire to escape from intercourse with the Greeks can hardly have been one of them, seeing that he brought salvation alike to Gentile and to Jew. He had much to do, and little time in which to do it. His labours lay among those tribes from whom he was to choose his ministers and name his successors. Salvation was to come of the Jews, even to the outer nations of the world ; and his religion being not a word, but a Life, it was his business to dwell among his brethren in the flesh, in order that he might teach them by his example how to live.

Again, a man of austere race would find much to deride and more to condemn in the new city and in the Golden house. The temples were built to idols ; the streets were full of harlots ; the markets were crowded with unclean birds and beasts. The harbours bristled with war-ships. The palace shone with gold in impious rivalry with the Temple front. Could he find profit in the fanes of Zeus and Aphrodite ? In the Temple and the synagogue he could appeal against the priests of Jehovah to their sacred books ; but the idolatrous Greeks had no antique purity of faith on which the teacher could fall back.

And again, in the eyes of a Jew, that city of Tiberias, bright as it may have seemed in a Roman's eyes, would be judged impure, not only by the Oral, but by the Mosaic law. In laying out his ground, the Tetrarch had been forced to plant some of his streets among ancient graves.

To what people these graves had belonged, no man could tell ; but to disturb the rock in which they had been dug by forgotten owners, was an offence of which no Jew could have been guilty ; not because, like a Frank, he would have thought the ground holy, but because, like an Oriental, he would have considered it polluted and accursed. Of all the evil things in this evil world, none was so repulsive to a Jew as Death. No symbol of a broken shaft, of an extinguished torch ; no imagery of a fading flower, of a sleeping child ; made the thought of death beautiful and tender in a Syrian's mind. To a Hebrew the symbol of Death was that of a figure either laying a snare, or presenting a cup of poison to the lips. Abraham longed to get rid of Sarah's corpse—"let me bury my dead out of my sight." In the East a grave is never a sacred thing, and the dead are never deposited in holy ground. Among the Jews a dead body was to be cast out from the city gates, far from the Temple, far from the synagogue ; out into the dismal ravines, among the haunts of hyenas and savage curs. No tree, no flower, was planted over a Jewish grave ; and a hole in a rock is all that was given to the greatest king. The foulest term in a language, rich in powers of abuse, was that of death, and the darkest spirit was appeased by calling his enemy a sepulchre and a whited wall.

To dwell then among the dead, in a place where dead bodies had been laid, was a thing of which no Jew could be guilty unless the possession of devils had driven him mad.

JESUS kept aloof from this new city ; but he wandered about the Lake Country, prescribing and teaching, until the Feast of Purim drew him once more to the Temple hill.

This feast of Purim was not a Mosaic, but a Babylonish feast. Founded in Persia during the Exile, to commemorate the death of Haman and the rise of Esther, it belonged by origin and character to that series of Pharisaic rites which the Maccabees adopted and established as the distinctive

signs of the Jewish faith. Eighty-five elders are said to have voted against the adoption of this Babylonish feast when it was first proposed by Mordecai ; but the people soon learned to like it so much that in time it became their favourite feast ; a common proverb among the Separatists declaring that the Temple might fail but that Purim would last for ever.

It was a feast of mirth ; often rioting down into an orgy. On the first day, the people thronged to the synagogue ; women and men, girls and boys, the blind and the lame ; where they heard the story of Esther ; the elders cursing the Persian and the Amalekite ; the boys clapping hands, and the whole congregation shouting, "Cursed be Haman ! Blessed be Mordecai !" This service being ended, the people went home to eat and drink, to sport and riot, still crying in their cups, "Cursed be Haman ! Blessed be Mordecai !" Purim was a Jewish saturnalia, during which there was music in the doorways and dancing in the courts. Men put on women's clothes. A Jew was told to drink wine until he got drunk and fell asleep on the floor. The rule as to what was meant by being drunk was short and clear ; to comply with the custom, it was said that the reveller must be so far gone in stupor as not to know whether he was cursing Haman or cursing Mordecai. A favourite story, told in the Talmud, illustrates this rule. Two pious elders, Rabba and Zira, agree to keep the feast of Purim together, and both being drunk and rolling on the floor, Rabba kills Zira. In the morning when Rabba awakes and finds that he has murdered his friend, he prays to the Lord, and the Lord, listening to his voice, because the deed was done in Purim, restores Zira to life. Next year when the feast comes round, Rabba proposes that they should drink together once more ; but Zira declines his proposal on the ground that miracles do not happen every year.

This Persian festival, so hostile to the old spirit of Hebrew law and the habits of Hebrew life, had one good

feature. The poor were remembered in the midst of mirth ; every one who had means being commanded to give alms ; and the feast of Purim, like that of Christmas among Franks, was a season devoted to charitable thought and charitable work.

At such a time, the hearts of men might be found open to the Religion of Love.

CHAPTER XLI.

A JEWISH SABBATH.

COMING to Jerusalem for this feast of Purim, and walking near the great pool of Bethesda, in the sheep-market, a spot which he had to pass daily on his way from Olivet to the Temple hill, JESUS saw on the banks of this pool a crowd of sick persons, some halt, some aged, and some blind ; for, like many of the wells in Gaul and Britain, the spring of Bethesda possessed healing virtues ; and the poor people of the country, apt to personify nature, had a legendary belief that an angel visited the great Pool and agitated the water, and that when the water had been stirred by this angel, the first man who stepped into it would be cured, just as many Franks in the middle ages imagined that the wells could only cure them through the blessing of a saint.

It was the Sabbath day.

In the Temple hard by, these wretches could hear the groaning of bulls under the mace, the bleating of lambs under the sacrificial knife, the shouting of dealers as they sold doves and shekels. Bakers were hurrying through with bread, the Captain of the Temple was on duty with his guards. Priests were marching in procession ; and crowds of worshippers standing about the holy place. Tongues of flame leaped faintly from the altars, on which the priests were sprinkling blood.

This Pool of Bethesda lay outside the Gentile court ; on

the north side of the Temple, near to the wall ; but the wretches who lay around it on their quilts and rags, the blind, the leprous, and the aged poor, drew no compassion from the busy priests. One man, weakest of the weak, had been helpless no less than thirty-eight years. Over this man JESUS paused and said :

“Wilt thou be made whole?”

“Rabbi, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool ; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.”

The Compassionate answered him :

“Rise. Take up thy bed and walk !”

At once the life leaped quickly into the poor man's limbs. Rising from the ground, he folded up his quilt, taking it on his arm to go away ; but some of the Pharisees, seeing him get up and roll his bed into a coil, ran towards him, crying : ‘It is the Sabbath day ; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.’ It was certainly an offence against the Oral Law.

Among the many marks which stamped the Jews as a peculiar people, Sabbath observance was perhaps the one mark most distinctive and conspicuous. A Greek had his religious feast, a Syrian his gathering in the temple, an Egyptian his sacrifices and his prayers. Many orders of men besides Jews had the right of circumcision ; to wit, the priests of Memphis, the Edomite sheikhs, the princes of Tyre. But no other people in the world had a seventh day of peculiar sanctity, a God's day, on which no man would labour for the things that perish. The Greek knew no Sabbath. The Philistine never ceased from his plough, the Sidonian from his ships. In Tiberias, in Ptolemais, one day was like another day. A division of time into weeks was unknown in Athens, and became known in Rome only when the legions, learning it from the people of Alexandria, carried it westward from the Nile. The name, and the thing, were borrowed from the Jews, of whom it had long been a singular and striking sign. Heathen poets, like

Ovid and Juvenal, distinguished a Jew by his Sabbath even more than by his physiognomy and his garb.

But like every other virtue of his race, the Jew had debased his Sabbath virtue into vice. The Sabbath had been given to man as a blessing ; the Pharisees made of it a curse. Proud of this gift of God to his fathers, he fenced it about with edicts, toyed with it, made an idol of it, set it above every other rite, until the mere ritual observance came to occupy in his heart the place of God.

In carrying out his rule of observance, a Jew was forbidden to do many trifling and some necessary things. From the moment of hearing the ram's horn, a sacred trumpet called the shofa, blown from the Temple wall, announcing that the Sabbath had commenced, he was not allowed to light a fire, to make a bed, to boil a pot ; he could not pull his ass from a ditch, nor raise an arm in defence of his life. When thousands of men had been lost in war, the last of these clauses had been abolished by the Maccabees ; after which change a Jew was allowed to defend his life on the Sabbath day. But no other clause in this stern code had been softened. A Jew could not quit his camp, his village, or his city on the day of rest. He might not begin a journey ; if going along a road, he must rest from sundown till the same event of the coming day. He might not carry a pencil, a kerchief, a shekel in his belt ; if he required a handkerchief for use, he must tie it round his leg. If he offended against one of these rules, he was held to deserve the doom awarded to the vilest sinners. Some rabbins held that a man ought not to change his position ; but that whether he was standing or sitting when the shofa sounded, he should stand or sit, immovable as a stone, until the Sabbath had passed away.

It was only in the synagogue and the Temple, chiefly in the Temple, that this stringent rule could be set at nought. A law which put an end to gifts and sacrifices in the Temple would not have suited the chief priests and high priests, and these smiling Sadducees clung to the sacerdotal

rule that there must be no Sabbath in holy things. A cripple could not carry his rug a mile, a hungry man could not pluck a grain of wheat ; but the Temple fires might be lit, the shew-bread might be baked, the altars might be trimmed and guarded, the shekels might be paid in to the receivers, the doves and heifers might be slain, and the victims might be burnt with fire. In the Temple courts, the Seventh day was the busiest day of the week, for on the Sabbath every Jew who made an offering to God was expected to present two shekels instead of one shekel, two doves instead of one dove, and two rams instead of one ram.

So, when the Jews, who came crowding about the poor cripple now made whole, shouted to him that he must not lift his quilt and go home, because it was the Sabbath, he answered that He who had cured him had also told him to take up his bed and walk. These facts were strange. A man had cured this aged cripple by a word, and that very same man had told him to break the law ! The Jews questioned him more sharply, as to what sort of man this was who had done this thing ; but he could not tell them, his physician having gone away.

Later in the day, JESUS met him in the Temple court, and said to him :

“ Behold, thou art made whole : sin no more ; lest a worse thing befall thee.”

The cripple now heard from those about him that the man was called Jesus of Nazareth, and he forthwith told the Pharisees where they might find him. These Jews would have killed JESUS if they had dared, because he had broken their Sabbath day ; and, to escape their fury, he returned into the Lake Country of Galilee.

He broke their Oral Law, that he might bring his followers to a sense of its degrading spirit. When he came back into the Lake Country, he walked out on a Seventh day into the plain of Gennesareth, and some of his disciples, being hungry, plucked the full ears of corn, rolled them

between their palms, and ate the grains of seed. Some Pharisees, who followed him about to watch his doings and accuse him in the synagogue, said :

“Why do you that which is unlawful on the Sabbath day?”

JESUS answered them from their sacred books—that David being hungry, went into the Temple, and ate of the shew-bread, which only the priests were allowed to touch ; also that the priests made fires, slew rams and doves, and even baked bread for the Temple, guiltless of any sin. And when he had said this, he delivered to them a new truth :

“THE SABBATH IS MADE FOR MAN, NOT MAN FOR THE SABBATH.”

Another day, also the seventh, on going into the synagogue of Capernaum, he noticed a man with a palsied hand ; and some of the Pharisees, closing round him, put the question whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? JESUS knowing how far the Oral Law could be warped, replied :

“What man is there among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will not lay hold of it and pull it out? How much better, then, is a man than a sheep?”

He bade the palsied man stretch forth his arm, and he gave to his Church a new and true law of Sabbath observance, new to the ignorant multitude, though it was perhaps not new to the pupils of Hillel and Gamaliel, subduing the external form to the diviner spirit :

“IT IS LAWFUL TO DO GOOD ON THE SABBATH DAY.”

CHAPTER XLII.

ANTIPAS HEROD.

IN the midst of these labours in the Lake Country, JESUS received a call from Tiberias to appear in the court of Antipas Herod, in the audience-room of the Golden house.

A true son of his father, Antipas never ceased to believe that he would one day ascend the throne of Herod the Great; hence the homage which he paid to Cæsar, the palace which he built in Jerusalem, the favour which he showered on the Greeks. Yet, while striving to make friends for his claims on every side, he allowed his passions to hurry him into offences against law and right.

During his father's lifetime he had been married by Herod the Great, not to a niece, after the rule of his house, but to a strange woman, a daughter of Aretas, king of Petra and Emir of the desert tribes—that Arab prince with whom Herod had been long at war. Aretas was a proud and independent man; for the wastes of sand which surround Petra defied the legions of light troops which had been sent against him, and the city carved in the rock was never subdued. In the Wady Musa, a halting-place for camels and hajjees, Aretas held his Arab court. From this fortress he had sent out his clouds of horse to overrun Perea, and in some seasons to devastate Samaria and Galilee. Tired of a war from which he gained neither glory nor profit, Herod had made peace, proposed a family alliance, and received a

young Arabian princess in Jerusalem, to be the wife and queen of his most favoured son.

For many years the Arab lady lived with her soft and sensual lord; a true woman, a loyal wife, a courageous friend, to one who was little worthy of such love; until her bad husband, in one of his many journeys to Rome, lodging on his way under his brother's roof, stung her pure heart by falling in love with that brother's wife.

The Princess Herodias, the light, the splendour, and the shame of Herod's line, was the daughter of Aristobulus, a son of Herod and Mariamne, his queen of the Maccabean blood. While yet a child, she had been given in marriage without love, a marriage of family and state, to her uncle Philip, a man whose birth she considered ignoble, and whose age was more than double her own. For this uncle Philip was a son of that Mariamne whose father, Simon son of Boëthus, Herod had called to Jerusalem from Alexandria, and made his new High Priest. A bitter feud existed between the offspring of the Maccabean Mariamne and the Boëthusian Mariamne; members of the old family and of the new; and Herod's children of the Boëthusian line were hated and despised by his children of the Maccabean line. Herod may have hoped to heal these feuds in his family by marrying his son by the second Mariamne to his granddaughter by the first; but the result was like that of mating a sheep-dog with a pard. The light young girl despised her husband Philip, as a man beneath her in ability, in ambition, and in blood. They lived together while the old King reigned and governed, and a girl, called Salome, was the only offspring of the unhappy prince.

When Herod's will was read, Herodias received a second shock—her husband being cut off from the succession without receiving a crown, a province, even a city. Philip's mother had been accused of a desire to see justice done to the eldest son of Herod, the true heir to the crown; and the tyrant, angry with her for this desire, struck her son's name from the will, which gave provinces and cities to

his brothers; an act which not only robbed this prince of all share in his father's house, but cost him all that was left him of his wife's fidelity and love. Herodias could not make up her mind to shine in a private sphere. Born in a palace, in a palace she would live and reign. So, turning her eyes from the penniless uncle whom she had sworn to love, she threw her dark and tempting beauty, her high blood, her agile spirit, into the way of that semi-royal uncle whom she could not dream of taking to her arms without public scandal and private sin. But what to her would be public scandal and private sin? The beautiful Maccabean princess smiled at such words. What had she to do with these Pharisees and their Oral Law? Was she bound by their law, or by any law, to forego her birthright of rank and state? Her husband Philip was poor, his brother Antipas was rich. One dwelt in a private station; the other reigned in the Golden house. The first was nobody in the world; the other was a prince, on his way to be a king. She wished to be a queen; to stand at the head of a court; to move about the world with pomp. Hence her resolution was taken, that as Antipas was the most powerful prince of her race, she would become his queen and wife.

In any case, such a thing as she conceived in her mind would have been hard to bring about. Philip was alive. Even if he were swept away from her feet, and she were free to marry again, Antipas Herod, being her husband's brother, was one of the very few men whom she could never wed; for nature, and a law founded in nature, had put between her and her desire the obstacle of blood. But Philip was alive; and custom prohibited a woman from suing for a divorce. A man might put away his wife: a woman putting away her husband was a scandal utterly unknown. Should she work up her courage to this height of daring, what could be done with the Arab wife of Antipas Herod? A man might have more than one queen; but neither the daughter of Aretas nor the daughter of Aristobulus was a woman to bear a rival on her throne. One of

these women must give way that the other might reign alone, and the Jewish princess resolved that the Arabian lady should be degraded and divorced.

Antipas could refuse her nothing. She was his fate. He knew that in carrying out her scheme, he would have to put a cruel affront on his faithful wife. He felt that in wronging his wife he would rouse the old desert lion, whose claws had been more than once felt in Sebaste and Sephoris. He was aware that even if he could dishonour his wife and defy Aretas without being ruined, he could not marry a woman who had been his brother's wife while that brother was still alive. The law forbade it. Public feeling forbade it. All Galilee, all Samaria, all Judea, would resent so heinous a breach of morals. He knew that his brother Archelaus had fallen from his throne through the very crime which Herodias was tempting him to commit. Yet, peering into her dark eyes, he threw himself, body and soul, into perdition.

While he was absent in Rome, the guilty lovers agreed that she should remove from beneath her husband's roof, so that on his return they could meet in Tiberias, in the Golden house, and carry out all their plans.

A scheme so wild and strange, so sure to alarm and to offend many persons, could not be kept a secret long; for women will prattle and pages take bribes; and when the Arabian princess heard of this plot, of her husband's weakness, and of her rival's shame, the blood of her fathers kindled in her veins. But while her pulses beat with fury at the thought of being put away, she took prudent steps to guard herself from deceit, and, if the worst should come, to escape from her miserable home. She sent news of her wrongs to Petra; conveyed her jewels and treasures to Macherus; and caused measures to be taken by the Arab sheikhs to assist her flight. Like Petra, the stony capital of the desert, Macherus was a strong hill-town in the midst of arid wastes; a rocky plateau, on which Herod the Great had built a huge pile, half-palace, half-castle, to overawe the Arab

tribes. The town was high and lonely, and of enormous strength; having abundant springs and wells, a little verdure, including the upas tree, and very high walls; in fact, it was a frontier fort, which had given Herod a strong grip over all the neighbouring tents. This town had fallen to Antipas, as one of the chief places of Perea, and being one of the palaces in which he sometimes held his court, no suspicion could arise from the Arabian princess sending messages and packages to Macherus; at least on the part of men who knew nothing of her wrongs.

On her husband's return from Rome, and the renewal of his guilty love, she felt that the time for her to fly had come; for these Herodian princes had never been nice in their dealings with inconvenient wives; and she feared lest those who found her in their way might think it safer to put hemlock into her drink than a letter of divorce into her hands. She concealed her fears, and deceived their vigilance so well, that when she rode away from the Golden house, smiling and unsuspected, every one thought she was going away, a happy wife, on a trip of pleasure to her husband's Perea seat. The guilty pair seemed glad to see her go; her departure leaving them alone with their darling purpose and their secret sin. From town to town, from castle to castle, through Galilee into Perea, she was carried by her husband's officers in state. Was she not their master's wife? On the frontier of the desert, high up among the Moab mountains, she met the Arab sheikhs, her own and her father's friends; and once among these sons of the desert, she threw off her mask, denounced the adulteress, and put herself and her cause on the justice of God.

CHAPTER XLIII.

HERODIAS.

ARETAS instantly made war against Perea to avenge this insult to his child.

In the face of this war on the side of Petra and the hill-tribes, in the face of stern remonstrance from the Jewish priests, and of loud clamour from the people, Antipas took Herodias to wife, and set up her court in the Golden house.

The war becoming sharp on the frontier, he called his lords and captains together and marched towards Macherus. On his way towards the Dead Sea, he may have heard for the first time of John the Baptist; and finding that John had won the ears of many people, he sent for him to Macherus; hoping to dazzle the poor teacher by his magnificence, and gain his advocacy among the Jews. But John was not a man for courts and kings. Instead of soothing the Tetrarch, of siding with Herodias, the plain and stormy ascetic, lifting up his voice against them, even in the midst of their captains and courtiers, denounced their union as unlawful and incestuous; using such vigorous language of rebuke as Nathan poured out upon David, and Elijah upon Ahab; in a voice of rebuke and of menace which drove the guilty woman almost mad to hear. She wanted a prophet to bless, and John only opened his mouth to curse.

Herodias would have taken his life on the spot; but her less audacious partner, having the Arabs in his front, the Jews in his rear, each angry with the union that John de-

nounced, was afraid to strike. But how could he leave this man at large? Such words as John had spoken in the Tetrarch's presence, might provoke a rising among the Jews. To stay the mischief, he kept John at Macherus; in what St. Luke calls a prison; in a part of the palace which he was not permitted to leave; being kept in a sort of free custody, until the war in Perea should be past. He was so far left at liberty in his prison as to be able to communicate with his disciples, to send messages into Galilee, and apparently to exhort and preach.

While John was still living at Macherus, he sent two of his followers to JESUS, instructed to hear his words, to see his actions, and to judge from what they heard and saw whether He was the Christ who was to supersede all minor prophets. The men walked up from the desert country into Galilee. When they found JESUS, they asked him, as the Jews had asked him, whether he was the Christ? JESUS bade them look on. Calling to his side the blind and the sick, the lame and the leprous from the crowd, he spake to them and touched them, and they became whole.

"Go your way," said JESUS to the messengers from Macherus, "and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached." These things were to be the signs of Christ, and the disciples of John were answered by facts. The words were spoken in the day of John's trouble, in the midst of a great multitude, some of whom were Pharisees and masters of the law. JESUS added these further words: "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

John had not long to live. On the birthday of Antipas Herod, a feast was given at Macherus to the lords of his court and the officers of his camp. Herodias and her daughter Salome, a girl who inherited her mother's beauty and shared her evil passions, graced the military revel by

their presence. After supper was done, when Antipas and his guests were fired with wine, the youthful Salome swam into the room, attired in a loose rich robe of gauze, and danced before the riotous company one of those Oriental movements which influence the blood of youth and disturb the minds of aged and ascetic men. It was an act of condescension and of shame. Salome was a princess, stooping to the art of an almeah ; but having done this indecent thing she had gained a right to her reward ; and by the custom of Oriental courts she could demand the wages of her shame. The excited Antipas swore in the hearing of his guests, that the beautiful girl who had stirred their pulses, should have her wish, in whatever form she might like to name it. In such a moment, an Oriental prince would expect her to demand a precious jewel, a royal palace, the love of some favoured youth ; such prayers and such gifts being things of his age and country. A dancer of low degree might be paid for her immodest arts by the gift of a great purse, a flock of goats, a fine house, a dozen slaves. Salome knew her part ; for the mother who had sent her in to dance before all those revellers, had told her to ask for the head of John the Baptist placed in a charger ; that is to say, in one of those dishes in which the fruits and viands of the table had been served. The fair dancer named her price.

Of himself, the Tetrarch would have shrunk from shedding blood ; and he may have feared lest it might not be safe to shed the blood of a man so popular as John. But his word was pledged ; the captains who had heard him swear sat round about him ; and in all that riotous company, courtiers and soldiers, sycophants and slaves, the Baptist was without a friend. So it went hard with him, as it always does with the friendless in an Oriental court. Panting, beautiful, and exposed before all those men, Salome stood, demanding the preacher's head in a charger ; nothing more, nothing else ; and the tipsy Tetrarch having at length given his orders, an officer went out from the feast, and slew the prophet in his

cell. Herodias was avenged on the man who had dared to tell her the unwelcome truth.

Among the Jews, the consternation caused by this murder was deep and wide ; for the Baptist's followers considered him a great prophet ; a new Elias, if he were not Elias himself come back from the dead. Even in the camp of Antipas there were many who resented their master's crime, as an act which would bring down upon them and upon their children the curse of blood.

Had Antipas Herod been a ruler of the Jews only, he would scarcely have been able to stand his ground against this military discontent, and this popular aversion ; but the laws of marriage not being the same among his Greek and Syrian subjects as among the Jews, many of his people, and especially his officers and courtiers, accustomed to the license of Egypt—marriage of brother with sister—would see nothing unnatural, perhaps nothing offensive, in his union with a brother's wife. But this Greek indifference to his crime, though contributing to his safety, could not lighten the weight upon his mind. In some sort Herod was a Jew ; having the fears and superstitions of a Jew. He believed in the avenger of blood ; he trembled at the awful name of Elias. After the deed was done at Macherus, he more than half believed, with many of his people, that John had been Elias ; and that in a mad moment he had slain the most terrible of all the prophets. Then he recollected that if Elias had once come back from the dead, he might come again ; and hearing, soon after the Baptist's murder, that a new prophet had arisen in Galilee, one who, by a word of his mouth, was curing the lame and the blind, who was doing these wonders at the gates of his own capital, almost in the doorway of the Golden house, a chill of terror struck to his heart. Could this man be any other than John, come back to haunt his footsteps, and to punish his crimes ?

On his return, therefore, from Perea to Tiberias, the Tetrarch sent one of his officers to find out JESUS and invite him to the Golden house.

The Lord had no mind to enter the Greek capital, and to confront the weak prince and his wicked wife. Nothing could be easier for him than to avoid this call ; he had only to step into Peter's boat, cross the lake into Gaulonitis, and take up his abode for a little while on the other side. So he went over to the Gamala shore, into the territories of Philip, the second Herodian prince of that name, where he would be safe from the curiosity of Antipas, the malice of Herodias.

Only a few days after his flight, JESUS came back over the lake to Capernaum ; and from this time he went more openly about Galilee, as the hour to announce himself drew nigh : healing the sick, comforting the needy, calling to his side the lowly, eating bread with publicans and sinners, everywhere softening the hearts of men towards each other, and preparing the way for his great declaration that Jews and Greeks were alike the sons of God.

A providential act allowed him to hint these tidings to his own people before the day arrived which he had chosen for a public and solemn revelation of the truth. There lived at that time in Capernaum, a Roman officer, whom St. Luke calls a centurion, who was obviously a man of high rank, of vast riches, and of liberal mind. He seems to have commanded the Roman troops at this frontier town. Willing to please the people, and holding, like every one trained in the Greek philosophy, that it was wise to propitiate the local gods, he had built a synagogue on the hill-top, and had given it as a splendid present to the Jews. This good man having a servant whom he loved, and whom he saw sickening to the point of death, the elders of the town came to JESUS in his name, and besought him that He would heal the sick man for the centurion's sake ; saying, that this Roman officer was worthy of all good, being a man who loved the Jews and who had built them a synagogue. At the desire of these Jewish elders, but contrary to the Separatist policy, JESUS went with them towards the stranger's house. In the streets of Capernaum they met the friends of the centurion

coming out to meet them, with a request from that officer (who was aware how much a Jew objected to enter a Roman house) that the Lord should not come into the sick room, but should speak the word and his servant would be healed. Turning to his disciples, JESUS said :

“ I have not found so great faith : no, not in Israel. And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”

The centurion's servant was healed the self-same hour : this being the first miracle which the Lord performed on any man not of the sacred race.

One day when surrounded by a multitude of people, JESUS was startled by the appearance of Mary and his brothers, who, on hearing that their cousin John had been put to death, had come down the valleys to Capernaum in search of him. They feared the wrath of the adulteress ; and they wished to get him away from that dangerous vicinity of the Golden house. JESUS, knowing that the hour was now nigh, when, in words no less than in deeds, he must announce himself and complete his work, said to those who stood near him, and who told him that his mother and his brethren were among the crowd, striving to push through it :

“ Who is my mother ? Who are my brethren ?”

And then stretching out his hand over those who clung about him, the Lord added :

“ Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

Yet he went up with his mother into the hill country of Galilee, and again dwelt with her in the old house at Nazareth ; that he might now, in a more solemn manner, commence those trials which were to bring him a martyr's crown, by an express announcement to the Jews of his Messiahship, made in the very synagogue in which he had prayed when a little child.

CHAPTER XLIV.

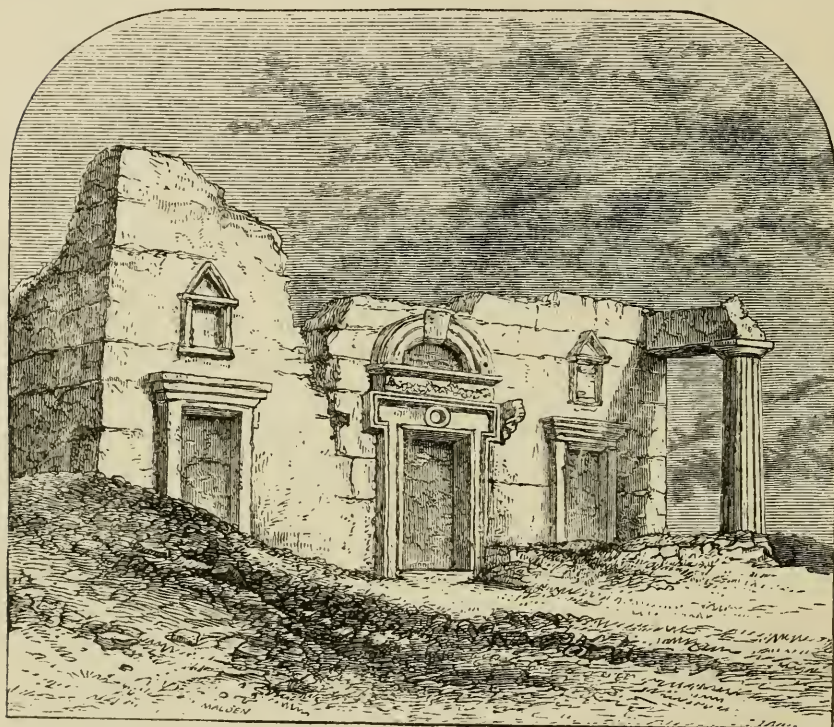
THE SYNAGOGUE.

WHEN he was gone into his own country, says St. Matthew, JESUS taught them in their synagogues. He loved to teach and pray in the synagogue; a popular institution; which the great priests disliked, and in which they had no official part.

The synagogue—house of meeting—was not a very old thing in Jewry, though older than the Maccabees; being a popular growth, as the Sanhedrin was a patrician growth. When every child could read Hebrew, when every man and woman could repeat the shema, and when every harper and singer could rehearse at evensong the psalms of David, there had been little call for any other than household worship. Every tent was a chapel, every father a priest. Moses had thought it enough for the sacred books to be publicly read once in seven years. Every man was supposed to know the Law by heart, and the object of reading the law in public was not so much to teach it, as to guard against corruptions of the text. But when the scroll was lost, and the tongue in which it was composed had been half forgotten, fears might arise lest the sacred records should disappear. Then, the instincts of shepherds and villagers saved them by humble and unexpected means. Ezra had founded a weekly meeting of neighbours, to sing psalms, play the pipe and tabret, and listen to good words. These little meetings became popular; and in due time, a house, big enough to hold ten

persons, in some cases more than ten, was built in every town. This house was called a synagogue, a meeting-house; in Latin *ecclesia*, in English church; a Greek name which fixes within certain limits the date at which it was introduced.

No synagogue of the time of Christ is now standing in Nazareth, or even in Galilee, to picture the place in which JESUS taught. Sun and rain, theft and malice, have been



SYNAGOGUE AT KEFR BIRIM, GALILEE.

hard upon these frail tabernacles; the soft stone of which they were built, and the need and greed of the Arab peasants, having either ground them back into dust or stolen them away for the erection of hut or fence. Yet a man like Gilbert Scott, from such ruins as abound within twenty miles of Nazareth, would rebuild a synagogue of Galilee, true to its original in every stone. At Capernaum,

at Kedesh, at Beth Arbel, at Meiron, at Kefr Birim, at other spots, all lying between Nazareth and the lake, you find ruins of synagogues, in some of which it is certain that JESUS must have prayed and taught.

These fragments, more or less perfect, more or less near to his time in date, would afford to an architect who reads the Bible every sort of hint from which to draw his plans. The remains at Meiron and Beth Arbel are of the period of the Herods; giving proof of their past splendour in broken column and colonnade; many of the fallen shafts being adorned with Corinthian capitals. Those at Kedesh and Kefr Birim are perhaps of the third century; having the lintels and doorways highly wrought, and the wall over the main entrance decorated with fruits and flowers. The synagogue built at Capernaum by the Roman centurion was of noble style, if it may be judged by the pillars and friezes which lie partly buried in the mould, now covered with brambles and prickly pears. These buildings for village worship were brightened in detail by the prevalence of Grecian taste; but the plan was everywhere the same; the outline being that of the Tabernacle in the desert, of the Temple on the Sacred Mount; the ornaments only, the friezes, flutings, capitals, colonnades, being added to the simple block by those who built synagogues on the more costly models of Antioch and Rome. Take the foundations which still peep out from the soil at either Kefr Birim or Capernaum. Cast away the Greek additions; work out the hints afforded in the Bible and Talmud; add some knowledge of the ritual now used in Safed and Zion; and it would be no hard labour to rebuild the meeting-house at Nazareth and to restore the worship in which JESUS took a part.

A synagogue, whether small or large, had the form of the temple and the tent; but the idea of a synagogue, like that of a church, is not a pile of stone, having this or that shape and height, but a gathering of the people to read the Law. The House of Meeting was built on the highest ground of

Nazareth ; with its door on the north side, away from Jerusalem, like the principal gates of an English church ; so that a worshipper, when entering the holy place, and when throwing himself on the ground in prayer, might have his face towards the Temple hill.

In early days a balcony hung above the door of a synagogue, as a balcony still hangs over the door of some Syrian houses ; but when the first traditions of the Exile had passed away, when Greek art had become familiar to the Jews, and foreign masons, deft and supple in their craft, had come to be employed in erecting sacred structures, as they were on nearly all private and public buildings, the simple balcony gave place to a handsome portico. Such a change, however, is not likely to have occurred in Nazareth, an obscure hamlet, peopled by peasants and shepherds, and lying away from the Roman road.

A house of unhewn stones, taken up from the hill-side ; squat and square, of the ancient Hebrew style ; having a level roof, but neither spire nor tower, neither dome nor minaret, to enchant the eye, like some of the houses and mosques of the modern town ; a pile to be noticed in the group of buildings only for its situation and its size—such was that simple synagogue of the Jews in which JESUS taught. The front, though otherwise plain, would have a wreath of fruits, either tooled or painted, in imitation of the clustering vine above the Temple door.

Inside, a Syrian synagogue is like one of our parish schools ; with seats for the men, rough sofas of wood, half-covered with rushes and straw ; a higher seat stands in the centre, like that of a mosque, for the elders of the town ; a desk for the reader of the day ; at the south end a closet, concealed by a hanging veil, in which the torah, a written copy of the Pentateuch, is kept in the sacred ark. A silver lamp, kept always burning, a candlestick with eight arms, a pulpit, a reading desk, are the chief articles of furniture in the room. The floor is rough, often unpaved, and the raised bench in the middle, from which the elders lead the

service, is painted in a crude style of art, with lakes and gardens, boats and flowers. The walls are bare, with no gold, no colour upon them, though they seem to be occasionally washed with lime. Nothing in a Syrian synagogue appeals to the sense of beauty, mystery, and awe, like the majestic art employed in the synagogues of Amsterdam and Livorno; art which the Jews of those cities may have learnt from the Moors and carried with them out of Spain.

In olden time, women were allowed to enter the synagogue with the men, as they still go into the mosque; though they were even then parted from father and son by a wooden screen. They are now shut out. A few females may be admitted, as in Zion, to an adjoining room, from which they can peer into the holy place through a grill; others may climb into a gallery near the roof, which they gain from the outside; and others, again, are content to crowd about the building, and to peep at what is being done through windows opening on the street. No female foot is now suffered to tread the synagogue floor.

Before entering a synagogue, as before entering a mosque, a man is expected to dip his hands into water; and where there is no stream or fountain near, it is usual to provide a trough. To cleanse the body is everywhere in the East the first part of an act of worship. A scraper stands at the synagogue door, lest the filth from the street should be brought in to defile the place; this scraper being a fixed part of the arrangements, like the bench raised from the floor and the lamp swinging from the roof.

Ten persons being necessary to form a meeting, every town or city having a synagogue, appointed ten men, called *Batlanim* (idlers—men of leisure), who were bound to appear in their places at the hour of prayer; and were otherwise made useful in collecting alms for the poor. Higher in office than these Ten was the *Chazzan*; a sort of deacon, who took charge of the house and of the scroll, who

opened the synagogue door, who kept peace within the court, and did the rough work of police; expelling the unruly, scourging the wicked, executing justice on the condemned.

Next came the Meturgeman; an interpreter of the Law, whose duty it was to stand near the Reader for the day, and translate the sacred verses, one by one, from the Hebrew into the vulgar tongue. Above him, again, were the Elders; in large towns a college of Elders, with a general charge over the flock; at the head of whom was a Chief Elder, a man chosen for his age, his piety, his beneficence, perhaps for his money; who presided over the college, and was the chief reader of the day.

When the people came in, they first bowed to the ark; the elders took their places on the raised platform; the rich went up to high seats near the ark; the poor sat on wooden sofas matted with straw; the little boys, many of them all but naked, rolled and tumbled about the floor. A bright, fierce, eager look—half-sowl, half-rapture—like that of famishing lions—burned and lowered in the faces of men and women. A prayer was said, and one of the psalms of David sung. The chazzan walked up to the veil, which he drew aside with reverence, lifted the ark from its niche behind the veil, took out the torah, a roll on which the Five Books were written, carried this roll round the benches, every one striving either to kiss or touch it with his palm; until he reached the platform, and delivered it to the Sheliach.

This old man, taking the scroll into his hand, rose from his seat and began his task; every one of his hearers following the text with his eye, his arms, and his very soul, as the elder, in a fierce drone, read, and the interpreter rendered the sacred words; every syllable, every pause being marked. This lesson of the day was called the parascha. At its close, the elder expounded the text in a sort of sermon called the midrash, when the torah was carried back through the crowd, the women sobbing and

stretching out their hands towards it ; the men kissing, crying, wailing, touching it as before, until the ark was closed and the curtain drawn.

The torah being replaced in the ark by the chazzan, the prayers began ; first the shema from Deuteronomy :

“ Hear, O Israel ; the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.”

There being no priest, no doctor, no official expounder of the law present in these acts of village worship, every hearer had, in those old times, a right to express his opinion of the sacred text and of what it meant.

The views of an elder, chosen because he had made money and built a big house, might be either futile, false, or wrong. A midrash delivered by such a man might contain bad history, false quotation, weak logic ; in which case any one of his hearers could start to his feet, demand the roll from the chazzan, open it again at the lesson, and preach against the sheliach ; putting him to the question, forcing him to explain, confronting him with chapter and verse. On certain days of the year this right of free inquiry and exposition was always used ; the debate growing warm, the commotion strong ; and the prize of the contest going to the man of most fluent tongue and most easy mastery of his text.

This service of the synagogue, a practical assertion that the Jews were still a nation of priests, could not begin until the batlanim, ten men free and of full age, were in their seats ; these men representing the people and having a function in the synagogue, which the prince and high priest had not. This village meeting employed no priest, allowed no slaughter of doves and rams. It was always a rival, and threatened to become a successor of that Temple service by which the sacerdotal bodies lived and ruled. In time it was so.

This humble rite of prayer and reading, not the magnificent sacrifice in blood and flame, has made itself the basis

of every religious system of East and West, being adopted alike in the Arabic mosque, in the Jewish synagogue, and in the Christian church. The temples of kings and high priests have passed away, their glory fading into a dream; while the chapels of the goatherd and the fisherman remain, the types of celestial beauty, in every corner of the earth.

CHAPTER XLV.

EXPULSION FROM NAZARETH.

“AND he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the Book of the prophet Isaiah, and when he had opened the book he found the place where it is written :

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because he hath *anointed* me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; and to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

JESUS closed the roll, handed it to the chazzan, and sat down on his bench; having spoken the most memorable words that have ever been uttered by the tongue of man. We read that the eyes of all of them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. They might well be so.

A young Nazarene—thirty-one years old, known to every one present as a child, as a youth, as a man; a carpenter, the son of a carpenter; one whose father had sat in that place, not in one of the high chairs near the veil, but among the humbler folk; whose mother was even then sitting among the women behind the screen—standing up and demanding the roll, had turned to the proof prophecy of their Messiah, and reading those awful words aloud, had

closed the parchment, announcing that he, JESUS the carpenter, son of Joseph and Mary, whom they all knew as neighbours, was the Anointed One.

No Jew had ever yet heard such a saying ; for the boldest of the many false Messiahs of that age had shrunk from openly announcing his claims in words. The Galileans who believed in Judas of Gamala, the Herodians who accepted Herod the Great, the Hillelites who clung to their Babylonian master, had never heard either Judas, Herod, or Hillel, proclaim himself the Anointed One. This was the first time that JESUS had taken upon his head the glory of that name.

In that congregation of his townsmen, from the sheliach and the batlan, down to the poorest Jew who crouched at the gate, there was perhaps not one who was not dreaming by night, watching by day, for a Deliverer to appear ; they were all either Pharisees, Galileans, or Herodians ; but the Deliverer for whom they prayed was to be a mighty prince, a greater than Joshua and David, one who would come to them in clouds and fire, with chariots and horsemen, with banners and triumph, with such state and glory as that in which the Moslem Arabs, their descendants, believe that JESUS will appear at his second coming ; and this celestial warrior was, in their belief, to put the Roman legions to the sword, scorch up the Greek cities, and destroy the temples of Diana, Ashtoreth, and Bel. JESUS had none of the marks by which they fancied they should know their Lord. He was not a prince ; he was not a soldier ; he had neither riches nor state ; he had no learning ; his calling was obscure ; his followers were the wretched ones of the earth. For twenty years, while toiling in his useful craft, he had been at every man's beck and call ; to make and to mend ; ready with his axe and line to repair the sheliach's lintel and the chazzan's roof.

They had heard of his doings in Cana, in Capernaum, in the towns of the plain ; for the wine had been made, the sick had been healed, the blind had received sight, only a

little way from their doors. But a Jew would be far less struck by these miracles than a man who had never yet heard of such things being done. His sacred books were full of signs and wonders. Every prophet in Israel was expected to work them; false prophets no less than true ones; the question with the Jews being, not whether miracles were wrought, but how they were wrought. Was it by the power of God, or by that of Satan? The Nazarenes were eager and scornful; slow of belief; impenitent of heart.

Closing the roll, JESUS turned to the people, and said: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Reader, chazzan, batlan, meturgeman, all the members of this Nazarene congregation, gazed round the room, saying one to another:

"Is not this Joseph's son?"

They bade him perform a miracle in their sight, as though he had been one of those Syrian jugglers who attend fairs and feasts, and do tricks for money. JESUS refused. He had never yet put forth his power to excite curiosity, to compel belief; only to alleviate pain, or to reward acts of faith. But this refusal to please them by doing in their synagogue that which he was said to have done in the street only vexed their pride. Why should he decline to perform wonders before them? Were they less worthy than a rabble of the wayside? They knew that he had cast doubts on the fact of Jews being the sole heirs, the one chosen race, the exclusive and peculiar people of God. They heard that he was in the habit of entering into strange houses, and of leaving blessings instead of curses when he went away; a course opposed to the lessons of their Oral Law.

For this great sin against Israel, his townsmen cried in a loud voice against him. JESUS appealed to their sacred books, in evidence that men of other nations than the Jews had been called and saved:

"I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and

six months, when great famine was throughout the land, but unto none of them was Elias sent save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the days of Elisha the prophet ; but none of them were cleansed save Naaman the Syrian."

What could the sheliach, the batlan, the people, say? The words which he read were true. Their sacred writings told them that God had given life to the dead son of the Sidonian widow ; that God had cleansed the leprosy from the Syrian soldier, by causing him to plunge into the Jordan seven times. Could they refute Elias? The young preacher gave them chapter and verse ; and that, again, was an offence. They could not answer him out of the law and the prophets. Let the sheliach denounce, let the chazzan threaten, let the batlanim yell and curse, as only a crowd of Jews can yell and curse, the appeal to their written history and prophecy stood unimpeachably clear and strong.

But they could rise upon him ; they could howl him down ; they could push him from the house ; they could cast him out from the congregation. Yea, cast him out : the lost man, the bad Jew, who taught the false gospel that God could have other children besides his own : put him out : not from the gate only, but from the earth, from the sight of living men !

Like Islam, Jewry is a church ; a church including within itself the most terrible functions of the state. When Galileo was condemned by the Pope in Rome, he was still an Italian ; but when Spinoza was cast out from the synagogue in Amsterdam he ceased to be an Israelite, and abandoned his Hebrew name. A heretic cannot be a Jew ; cannot live in Jewry. When there is no longer a place for a man in the synagogue, there is no longer a home for him in the city in which that synagogue stands. With that compact and terrible body of men, religion and society are one. An out-cast from one is an outlaw from the other. Thus, the Jews of Nazareth, finding JESUS at fault on two of their capital tenets, selectness of the Holy Race, and monopoly of Divine

favour, rose upon him as a false Messiah, and thrust him out from the synagogue as a man worthy of instant death.

The office of thrusting him forth belonged of right to the chazzan ; but the sheliach and the elders rose upon him, seized his person, dragged him to the height above the village, and would have put him to death by hurling him from the rocks.

Then occurred the first and last miracle which the Lord deigned to perform at Nazareth. As the loud and tumultuous people surged around him, yelling and cursing, hurrying him towards the brink of the precipice, he became invisible to their eyes, walking away untouched through their midst, so that when they looked for him he was gone.

Yes; gone away : gone away from them for ever !

CHAPTER XLVI.

CAPERNAUM.

GOING down from the hill country of Galilee, from the home of his youth, into the lake district, JESUS carried with him his mother and his brethren, who could no longer dwell in peace at Nazareth. In the fishing towns on the lake and the great road, he would be freer to preach and teach than in his own place, for in that low country the Pharisee and the Galilean had little power, half the people being Greek or Syrian, and the legions of Rome being present to keep the peace.

If the tetrarch in Tiberias was less zealous for the Oral Law than either a high priest on Moriah or a sheliach in Nazareth, the emperor in Rome was less zealous than even a tetrarch in Tiberias. Under the Romans a man was free to speak the truth. All ages, all events, all men, had from the first been tending towards this point ; a state of things in which a doctrine necessary to mankind, yet abominable to a Jew, could be preached in Palestine, made acceptable to some of its people, and sent through these willing agents to the far away ends of the earth. Only under the Roman eagles could such a thing have been done ; only under Cæsar's reign could JESUS have been left to preach a common salvation for Greek and Jew.

Capernaum, into which he now came to dwell with his mother, and in which he made himself a home, was a busy, bright little town ; a station on the great road ; a garrison

for Roman troops ; a port for collecting dues by land and lake ; a place of tanners, dyers, soap-boilers ; a market for oilmen, shepherds, cheesemongers, and fruit-growers ; a halting ground for the buyers and sellers of every kind, the corn-chandlers, the fishermen, the wool-staplers, the vintners, and the gardeners. Being the first town on the lake of Tiberias as you ride in from Damascus, as Arona is the first town on Lago Maggiore as you come from Turin, it was the port at which any one coming that way would embark for cities lying south and east on the shore. Standing on a hill of limestone, rough and rich with the flow of basaltic rocks from higher volcanic hills ; having the hot plain and cool lake of Gennesareth at its feet, with the palm, the orange, and the pomegranate blooming everywhere about, Capernaum became, like Como or Palanza nearer home, a retreat for the rich as well as a field of labour for the poor. Most of the Jewish inhabitants, net-makers, fishermen, farmers, were believers in a physical Messiah ; followers of Herod, of Judas, of Simon, of John ; Jews of an earnest and yet a most worldly type. The strangers who dwelt among those Jews, like every one trained in the Hellenic schools, were liberal and tolerant in affairs of faith. Had not the Roman governor built a synagogue for the Jews at his own expense ?

Capernaum, properly spelt Caphar na Hum, was one of the towns most favoured by the Lord. It was the first place to which he came after his baptism by John. There he dwelt for a little while with his early disciples, Peter and Andrew, James and John. There lived the good nobleman whose son he cured. There, too, he healed the demoniac in the synagogue ; relieved the mother-in-law of Peter ; healed the man sick of the palsy ; and restored the withered hand. There he made whole the Centurion's servant, and raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. From the blue waters of this lake he obtained the tribute-money ; and on its sunny shores, among the brambles and vines, he spoke his parables of the Tares, of the Sower, of the Treasure, of

the Merchant, of the Net. In the White Synagogue, built by the Roman soldier, he pronounced his discourses on Faith, on Fasting, on Humility of Spirit, on Brotherly Love. Near to Capernaum he fed the Five Thousand, walked on the sea, and preached his Sermon on the Mount. He loved the busy, basaltic town, and after his expulsion from Nazareth he made it the scene of his ministry. In the words of St. Matthew, a native of the place, it became his own city.

Where then was this favoured spot? In his later days, the Lord denounced it as an ungrateful place, unworthy of his love; yet the hearts of men will for evermore stir with a tender yearning towards the sands on which his feet then trod, and the traveller will seek for some safer knowledge of the site than we yet possess.

Strange to say, the great Churches of East and West, while bent on fixing the sites of events in the sacred story—the scene of the annunciation, of the Virgin's travail, of the baptism, of the last supper, of the agony in the garden, of the betraying kiss, of the crucifixion, of the burial, of the ascension into heaven—kept no clear record of the scene of so many miracles and sermons as Capernaum. The Churches are dumb. Critics have been busy with the site; but busy to no end except that of making and unmaking books. One party writes in favour of Khan Minyeh, a ruin on the western bank of the lake, lying midway from Tiberias to Bethsaida-Julias. A second party is in favour of Tell Hum; a mound of rubbish, also on the western bank, rising in the northern corner of the plain of Gennesareth, about two miles nearer than Khan Minyeh to the spot on which the Roman road once bridged the holy stream.

The weight of evidence appears to me all in favour of Tell Hum. Unhappily, while the name of Capernaum is nowhere found in the older Biblical writers, the Evangelists knew the place too well to think of giving any such bearings as those by which a distant reader now recognizes the true sites of Shiloh, Ebal, and Jacob's well. But Josephus, a stranger, writing for strangers, supplied the want. Twice

he uses the word Capernaum ; once in his history, once in the account of his own life. The first time, he speaks of a fountain of Capernaum ; and every one admits that this fountain, if it could be found, would be an index to the site of the town, as free from cavil as those springs of Elisha by which we fix the site of Jericho. The task is to find this fountain. In the plain of Jericho the fountains of Elisha flow alone ; but the western bank of the Sea of Galilee abounds in copious springs. Three of these springs : Ain el Madawarah, Round Fountain ; Ain et Tiny, Fountain of the Fig tree ; and Ain Tabiga, Fountain of Tabiga : share the prize between them. Josephus marks his fountain of Capernaum by three facts : it is copious ; it contains lake fish ; it waters the plain. Now, Madawarah is copious ; it helps to water the plain ; but it does not, and could not, from its distance, contain fish of the lake. Ain et Tiny, from its level, could never have been turned into the corn-fields of the plain. On the other hand, Tabiga is a copious spring ; it abounds in lake-fish, and it is surrounded by the tanks and conduits which in olden times carried its waters into the low-lying land. If these hints in Josephus stood alone, the aspect of the present springs and ruins would lead you to fix the fountain of Capernaum at Tabiga and the town at Tell Hum ; the spring having the same relation to Capernaum that the Virgin's fountain had to Nazareth, and that of Siloam to Jerusalem. But these hints do not stand alone. In the account of his own life, Josephus speaks of being wounded in the marshes of the Jordan, near the point where the river flows into the lake, and of being carried to a village which he calls in Greek Kepharnoum ; which place could have been no other than the Syrian Kepharnahum. This village exactly answers to the position of Tell Hum, and to no other ruin on the lake. The site of Tell Hum was the nearest inhabited spot to the Jordan marsh.

Now let us turn to the Gospel histories, for the little light which they afford. Capernaum was a large town, large enough to be called a city. It lay along the shore of the

lake on its western bank. It stood near to a creek in which boats might ride. Bethsaida lay to the north, Magdala to the south of it. The great road from Damascus to Tiberias ran through it. In its highest street stood a synagogue built by a Roman officer, as a gift to the Jews ; an edifice which must have been built in the style of art introduced by Herod the Great, with a Grecian portico, having marble columns, cornices, and walls. These points are enough, when taken together, to constitute proof ; and on a close scrutiny of the present ruins, it will be found that these conditions meet in Tell Hum, and in no other place than Tell Hum.

The wreck of Tell Hum is that of a big town ; for the stones of black and unhewn basalt lie tumbled along the slope for more than half a mile, without counting the ruins which may have been left from the mills and houses of Tabiga, the suburb of the Fountain. They would make a city as large as Jaffa. Tell Hum stands on the western bank, near the lake, about a mile from the Jordan. Close by it there is a fine creek, in which fishermen might haul their frail craft in a storm, and in which a boat could so lie that a man on board her might address a multitude standing on either bank. Creeks are rare on this abrupt coast ; and at Khan Minyeh there is only a deep shore line.

Again, Capernaum stood between the towns of Bethsaida and Magdala, on the path of the Roman road. Unlike the surface rock of Nazareth, which is soft and friable, easy to cut and quick to decay, that of the region round the upper end of the Sea of Gennesareth is a black basalt, as hard to tool, as slow to decay as marble itself. In making their roads, the Romans chopped through this solid rock, and a piece of their noble work is still visible near Tell Hum. No man can doubt that the great road from Damascus to Tiberias passed through Tell Hum.

And, again ; no other town on this part of the lake shows any trace of having had a Greek synagogue. At Tell Hum, tossed and buried among the thorns and brambles, lie the

ruins of a synagogue, fine as the wrecks of either Kefr Birim, Meiron, or Beth Arbel ; a large pile, ninety feet long, in plan and material such as a Roman officer, bent on making a magnificent present to the Jews, would build. The walls were of fine blush marble ; very white, of strong



RUINS OF THE WHITE SYNAGOGUE AT CAPERNAUM.

texture, admitting a very high polish ; a material which becomes almost luminous under a Syrian light. It was adorned with a Greek portico ; a colonnade, a noble cornice, and finely-wrought shafts, with capitals of good

Corinthian art. These ruins remind you by their size and beauty of many a mound about Ephesus and Syracuse. In the days when Jesus dwelt in Capernaum, the white marble synagogue would be all the more brilliant from the fact of its being surrounded by houses and magazines of black volcanic rock.

In the last place, there is the sharp identity of name. Kefr na hum is the old form of Capernaum. Nahum is apparently a proper name. Kefr or Caphar means village, and is used very much like the Arab Tell, a village on a mound. An Arab calls every heap of stones and dust a Tell; and in his eye it suffices for a Kefr to be abandoned and destroyed in order to become a Tell; that is to say, a mound, a heap. Thus, Capernaum and Tell Hum are but two forms of the same name, like Sarum and Salisbury, like Eboricum and York.

Two facts of another kind may be added. Arculf, the earliest Christian traveller, found the ruins of Capernaum at Tell Hum; and all natives of the country, whether Jews or Arabs, believe that Capernaum and Tell Hum are one place, in name and in site.

If this chain of facts be strong enough to bear the inference which runs along it, and Tell Hum can be accepted as the true site of Capernaum, the Lord's "own city," then this mound of marble, basalt, pottery, dust and sand, is one of the most sacred spots on the earth's surface.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE BREAD OF LIFE.

ONE Sabbath day, in the midst of his labour, JESUS entered into the white synagogue of Capernaum to pray and teach.

St. John, who lived hard by on the beach, among the boats and nets, and small fishermen's huts, has pictured the striking scene.

The marble pile lay bathed in the morning light ; the blue lake shone below, the blue sky shone above ; the rosy front of the Greek portico gleaming all the brighter from contrast with the dark surface of surrounding houses. On the steps stood an anxious and wondering group ; men whose tongues were all busy, whose thoughts were all swollen, with the story of a strange event ; for on the eve of that Sabbath day, in the sight of thousands of persons, both Jews and Greeks, the new Teacher who had come amongst them, the son of Joseph the carpenter of Nazareth, was said to have performed a stupendous miracle ; one without fellow since the day when the Lord had said unto Moses : ' At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread, and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God ; ' and in the evening there had come quails, and in the morning manna had been found lying on the ground ; for this JESUS of Nazareth was alleged to have fed a vast multitude of people on five barley loaves and two small fish from the

lake. Could these things be true? And if so, how had they been done?

Jews who had shared in the feast over night told others who had not been present, how JESUS left Capernaum in a boat with John, Philip, Andrew, Simon, and his other disciples, to go away into a desert place beyond the lake; how the people, both men and women, flocked to him from Bethsaida, Gerasa, and the hamlets lying along the shore; how boats came over from Tiberias, the Greek capital, bringing crowds of men and women eager to see him heal the sick and to hear his parables; how a great company of Jews, going up to Jerusalem for the Passover, by the usual caravan road, avoiding Samaria, came about him, until the multitude could be counted by thousands; how the Teacher, sitting down on the hill-side, in a place where there was much grass on the ground, explained to them the dark sayings of their prophets; how, in listening to his words, the moments slipped away, until meal time came round and the people were hungry and athirst; how he then paused in his discourse, and turning to Philip of Bethsaida said: "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" and Philip, not seeing that the Master was but trying him, replied—"Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may have a little;" how Andrew, the son of Jona, then observed to his Master, "Here is a lad which hath five barley loaves and two small fish; but what are they among so many?" how JESUS commanded the people to sit down on the green turf in rows, while he brake the bread and blessed it, giving it into the hands of his servants to carry round, so that every man, to the number of five thousand, besides women and children, ate and was filled; how those who went round the seats after this strange feast was ended picked up twelve baskets full of meat and crumbs; how the people, being amazed by these signs and wonders, cried aloud that surely this man was the Messiah that was to come, and would have seized him by force and proclaimed him King; but that he, knowing their

minds, suddenly withdrew himself from their sight, and went up into the mountain, like Moses into Sinai, alone.

Nor were these marvels all they had to tell.

As night came down over that desert place, the company had been compelled to disperse into the towns and villages on the lake ; for the next day being the Sabbath, on which day it was unlawful, according to the doctors, for a Jew to do any kind of work, to cook his dinner, to light a fire, to gather sticks, to step into a boat, to walk a mile (the Sabbath day's journey of the Oral Law being only six furlongs), any man who remained on the beach until sunset would have to stay in that desert place for twenty-four hours without shelter, food, and drink. No Jew, therefore, could think of staying until the sun went down ; even though in going away to his boat he might have to leave his Lord behind. Most of the crowd had not far to go ; Gerasa being only four or five miles to the south ; Bethsaida-Julias three or four miles to the north ; Capernaum, on the opposite bank, about six miles west ; and Tiberias, the capital, ten miles west by south. Many of those who had come from the Greek city took boat when the feast was over. Others waited on the strand expecting to see JESUS come back. Among the last to leave were Simon and the brethren ; but when the sun began to droop over the hills of Galilee, even the poor fishermen, seeing that the wind was rising on the lake, that they had six or seven miles to row, and that the Sabbath, on which no man could labour, was coming on, snatched up their oars and put out to sea, intending to make their own little creek before night and storm overtook them. Then, but not till then, the last of those who had loitered near the beach, that they might see Him once more, pushed away ; quite sure that JESUS had been left behind them in that desert place.

But now, on the Sabbath morning, it was known to every man in Capernaum, that as darkness came down, a squall of wind from the hills lashed the lake into foam and lifted the

waves into billows, against the might of which Simon and his fellows in their frail bark pulled in vain ; their utmost strength of arm being weak as that of children in the buffetings of such a storm ; until, peering out into the dim night, they saw the Master walking towards them on the water like a spirit ; that the fishermen were sore afraid of this vision, until the Lord spoke to them, saying, "It is I : fear not ;" that they knew his voice and took him into their boat ; that so soon as he was come on board, the sea became still, and their little craft lay quiet on the beach of Capernaum in front of their own house.

Such was the tale debated by eager men under the Greek portico of the synagogue. The crowd was great ; for boats had been darting in all day from the neighbouring towns. Many persons were curious about one who could give them bread without toil ; who could increase the barley loaves at his own will, just as God had done with the manna in olden times, so that he who gathered little had no lack. If JESUS could feed them by a word of his mouth, must he not be the Christ that was to come ?

JESUS sat in the synagogue in his usual place.

The Jews poured in, each man and woman making lowly reverence towards the ark ; the rich folks going up to the high seats near the veil, the elders mounting the stairs of the platform, the batlanim seating themselves on the benches, the women going apart behind the screen. Service began with the prayer of sweet incense ; after which the congregation, the batlanim leading, sang those psalms of David : "O give thanks unto the Lord ;" "Bless the Lord, O my soul ;" "The heavens declare the glory of God ;" "Praise ye the Lord ;" and other chants which are still dear and familiar to the Christian heart. When these psalms had been sung, the chazzan, going up to the ark, drew aside the veil, and took out the sacred roll, which he carried round the aisles to the reader of the day, who raised it in his hand so that all who were present could see the holy text. Then the whole congregation rose and cried :

And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel :
The law which Moses commanded us :
The inheritance of the congregation of Jacob :
The way of God is perfect :
The way of the Lord is tried :
He is a buckler to all who trust in him.

Opening the scroll, the Reader then read out the chapter for the day ; the people following him with their eyes and with their lips, nearly every one having the chief parts of the law by heart. When the lesson for the day was finished, the chazzan took the scroll from the reader, and carried it back to its place behind the veil, the people crying after it with a loud voice :

Let them praise the name of the Lord ;
For his name alone is exalted ;
His glory is above the earth and the heavens !

Then, when the roll was restored to the ark, they sang other psalms of praise and supplication ; after which the chief elder delivered the midrash, an exposition of the text which had been read. The time being now come to question and be questioned, all eyes turned on the Teacher who had fed the five thousand men with a handful of barley loaves, who had disappeared from the midst of those who wished to proclaim him King, and who had walked over the sea and soothed the storm. No one troubled the chief elder that day. No one bade the chazzan bring him the book. All minds were busy with the astounding miracles which they had seen, or of which they had heard.

Their questionings were sharp and loud.

“ Rabbi, when camest thou hither ? ”

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye ask me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life ; which the Son of man shall give unto you ; for him hath God the Father sealed.”

Then they asked him :

“What must we do that we may work the works of God?”—that is to say, works which are pleasing in the sight of God.

To which he answered, with a second public declaration that he was Christ, the Son of God :

“This is the work of God,” that is to say, the works most pleasing in the sight of God, “that ye believe on him whom He hath sent.”

“What sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work?”

Full of the great act, which many witnesses declared that they had seen in the desert beyond the lake, they wished to have it repeated before their eyes. Now, in the opinion of every Jew, one of the chief miracles in their history as a nation was the finding of manna, a gift from heaven, for forty years ; and this fresh act of feeding a great multitude on five small loaves and two fishes appeared to them like a challenge and declaration that the new Teacher was equal in authority to Moses. So they said to him :

“Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness ; as it is written : He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”

JESUS took up their thought :

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not the bread from heaven : but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.”

“Rabbi, evermore give us this bread.”

JESUS answered them :

“I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.”

Some part of the debate is here lost ; we have only the concluding words of the Lord’s discourse :

“But I said unto you, that ye have seen me and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me ; that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at

the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one which looketh on the Son and believeth in him, may have everlasting life, and that I should raise him up at the last day.

The elders, the batlanim, the chazzan, gazed into each others' faces and began to murmur against him, just as the men of Nazareth had murmured against him.

"Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then, that he saith, I am come down from heaven?"

JESUS spoke to them again.

"Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me except the Father which sent me draw him ; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is from God ; he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness and they died. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven ; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever ; yea, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Strange doctrines for the Jews to weigh ! Then leapt hot words among them, and some of those who had meant to believe in him and to follow him drew back. If he were the Christ, the Son of David, the King of Israel, why was he not marching on Jerusalem, why not driving out the Romans, why not assuming a kingly crown ?

"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

The Lord spoke again ; still more to their discontent and chagrin, seeing that they wanted an earthly Christ :

"Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

This was too much for many, even for some who had been brought to the door of belief. Eat his flesh, drink his blood ! "This saying is hard," the nearest disciples whispered to each other. It was not what they wished to hear from him ; for all these Jews, even those whom he called his own, were expecting to eat and drink with him, to share his power, to sit on his right hand, to be his captains and councillors in a visible kingdom of God, having its seat on Mount Zion, and its worship on the Temple hill. "I am the living bread," they quoted to each other ; "this saying is hard, who can stay and listen to it?" And many of them rose up and left the synagogue. Even among the Twelve there were some who felt doubt and discontent growing up in their hearts.

"Doth this offend you?" said the Lord to his own. "What then, if ye should behold the Son of man ascending up where he was before? It is the Spirit that giveth life ; the flesh profiteth nothing ; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life. But there are some of you that believe not:" referring, says St. John, to that Judas Iscariot who was to betray him in the end to death.

The service of the Synagogue ended, the elders came down from the platform, the chazzan put away the sacred vessels, the congregation came out into the sun, angry in word and mocking in spirit. They wanted facts ; he had given them truth. They hungered for miraculous bread, for a new shower of manna ; he had offered them, symbolically, his flesh and blood. They had set their hearts on finding a captain who would march against the Romans, who would cause Judas of Gamala to be forgotten, who would put the glories of Herod the Great to shame. They had asked him for earth, and he had answered them with heaven.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

PHARISAIC RITES.

YET only some of the Pharisees, not all, went about to kill JESUS ; for in the most active and hopeful sect in Galilee, a sect which was coming to include the great body of professing Jews, many persons still imagined that in his own good time JESUS would declare himself their king.

The Separatists reasoned from a dream to a dream. Were they not the Messiah's people? Had he any other friends? Did the Sadducee want a Deliverer? Did the Essene cry to heaven for a Prince? The first was happy in his purple and his palace ; the second in his goatskin and his cave. Judging from what they felt, the Pharisees concluded that when Jesus should think the time had come to connect himself with any party in the State, it must be with their own. Heaven divided him from the Sadducee, earth from the Essene. In opposition to the Sadducees, JESUS taught the providence of God, the efficacy of prayer, the rewards of a world to come ; in opposition to the Essenes, he preached the holiness of marriage, the charities of mirth, the duty of bearing and overcoming the present life. All these were Pharisaic doctrines, taught in the schools of Hillel and Shammai. It was true that as yet he had given no sign, that he had spoken no word, committed no offence, against Rome. On this account, some of the Galileans waxed wroth against him ; but these were only the younger and more impatient spirits. On the side of patience, it

could be urged that he had been born and reared according to Pharisaic rule, under the accepted ritual of the Oral Law; dwelling in their houses, praying in their synagogues, offering his dove and his sacred shekel, keeping the feast of Purim, and eating his share of the Paschal lamb. JESUS had been circumcised by the priest, and presented in the Temple; his ransom had been paid; and he had been properly received as a son of the law. When he began to teach and preach, he laboured among the Jews, and among the Jews only. His friends were Jews, his disciples Jews; and like a good Pharisee, like a man set apart, he abstained from entering into the Greek cities, and declined an invitation to the Golden house. Once, he declared that his message of grace was less for the Gentile nations than for the Jews—those lost sheep of Israel which had gone astray.

There was room for doubt; though the fears and hopes which wait on doubt were not quite equal in their force.

JESUS gave deep offence to these Pharisees by showing that their ritual observance of the Sabbath was not true piety; he gave still more offence by asserting that a good man might eat bread with unsprinkled hands. Purifying hands before meat was a cardinal test of the true Separatist Jew.

Any one who has lived in a tent, eating pottage of lentils and flesh with Arabs, knows how much good sense there is in the custom, prevalent from Cairo to Damascus, from Stamboul to Bagdad, which compels every man to wash hands before sitting down to eat. Arabs are not served on separate plates, and every man's fingers go dipping into the common dish. They have no knives, forks, napkins, spoons, and glasses; none of those dainty evasions by means of which a Frank can defy the inequalities of cleanliness between guest and guest. A neighbour at our feasts may have been spare of soap, without forcing us to swallow any portion of his dirt. Not so an Arab. Every time he dips his fingers into the dish, he contributes his share of impurities to a common stock. For the Orientals of the

lower class have only one dish out of which the family, the company, must eat. A rug is spread upon the ground, either outside the tent or in the lewan of the house ; in the centre of this rug the pottage is placed in a single trencher ; a stew of fowls and olives, of veal and cucumbers ; the flesh being minced with lentils, gourds, and tomatoes. The diners squat round in a circle, each man on a corner of the carpet ; when the chief of the feast, taking a bit of black bread between his thumb and finger, souses it into the pottage, leaving a few crumbs, perhaps, behind, but catching up a piece of the flesh, and bringing the bread back into his mouth soaking and savoury with herbs and oil. The next man does the same, and so round the ring. A Syrian's fingers are his knives and forks ; and during a single meal they may plunge a hundred times into the common mess. If they are clean, it is well for him who has to come next and next : if they are either grimy with dust or gritty with sand, the friends with whom he eats will each receive some of the unkindly benefit of his filth.

Hence, the custom of washing hands before meat is an act of comfort and politeness, of which the Hebrews in ancient days had a sense as quick as Turkish gentlemen in our own. They all rinsed hands before dipping into the dish ; Boaz, Solomon, Hillel, like their Oriental brethren, Pharaoh, Hiram, and Haroun ; cleansing themselves in the same manner and for the same cause. No law was needed, and no law was given, on this social usage. A Syrian passed his fingers through the water when he ate, as he scoured his pans when he cooked his mess, and spread his rug when he fell asleep. There was no more piety in plashing his hands than in paring his nails. Yet under the Maccabees, the Separatist Jews began to make of a habit which was common to all Arab tribes a law to themselves ; asserting for it a Mosaic origin, and teaching in their schools of learning that any breach of this law was a sin against God.

It was one of a thousand cases in which they replaced

Moses by Tradition; but this ceremony of washing hands being generally performed in public, it was a point on which the Pharisees were strict.

Being raised into an act of worship, the neglect of which rendered a Jew unclean, it became necessary to define the rite—to point out the true method of washing hands, so that a Jew might sit down to eat without fear of sin. A code of rules was framed for his use, which fills a good many pages of the Mishna. Some of the rules which a Pharisee was bound to know, were general:—to wit, that washing his hands was understood to mean washing his hands in water; that his hands were understood to be his hands up to the wrist; that water was understood to be water contained in a vessel, not running in a stream or lying in a well; that washing was to be understood as cleansing his hands with water three times. Each rule had its exceptions and explanations, which a pupil of the law must bear in mind. Then came the particular rules, four in number, which he must carefully observe. First, the water in which he was about to wash hands must be of the proper kind; second, it must be sufficient in quantity; third, it must be held in a proper vessel; fourth, it must be poured out upon his hands with a certain force. Each of these rules had its expansions and limitations. A volume would not hold the Jewish debates on the single question—What is the proper kind of water? Some of the defining marks were clear; others were not. It could not be sea water. It could not be mill water. It could not be water which had done any kind of work. But then arose the query—What is work? Is breeding fish work? Is boiling eggs work? The water, it was agreed, must be fresh. But what is freshness? A brackish spring was not fresh; but was the liquid held to be fresh, ceremonially, in which vinegar had been mixed, or a lemon had been squeezed, to keep it fresh naturally? So with the second rule, as to quantity. Less than a quartern for two hands would not serve; for one drop short of the true measure would have left a Jew in

sin, black as that resulting from his having told a lie, or stolen his neighbour's ass. The third and fourth rules were also edged round with snares into which he might haply fall. The water must be poured out in a way that required art to do it well, and the degree of force with which it streamed from the spout was a capital point. A jerk of the vessel might destroy the whole efficacy of the rite.

Had the pupil come to an end of these ritual laws at last? Far from it; he was only in the first and easiest stage of his journey. He might wash his hands with strict attention to all these rules, and yet remain unclean in body and in soul; every virtue in the act being destroyed by the law of vitiation.

Certain things were held to vitiate washing. What things? The elders differed in opinion as to detail; but the guiding rule was that everything which would have vitiated baptism, also vitiated washing. This rule, however, only changed the ground of debate; since no one could enumerate all the flaws which might destroy the virtue of baptism. Some points were admitted by all the schools; for example, that the right would be vitiated by these impurities of body—a film outside the eye; dry blood on a wound; plaister on the skin; the incrustation inside a scab; dirt under the nails; mud on the flesh; and potter's clay in the pores.

This mode of washing hands, so essential, yet so difficult, was observed by a Jew according to rules not less complete than those which governed the rite itself. He began on rising from his rug. Until his hands were ceremonially cleansed, an evil spirit was said to rest upon them, so that if he chanced to rub his eyes on waking he was told that he would lose his sight. This evil spirit being present on his hands, he could not touch his mouth, his nose, or his ears, lest the devil should slip from his fingers into his head. Some kinds of food required the hands to be cleansed after eating; as particular sorts of bread, all preserved meats, and everything in which there was salt. The same with respect to certain days in the year; for a Jew had to pour water on

his hands three times after the recital of particular prayers and benedictions ; all of which regulations must be borne in mind, on penalty of being struck blind. For a Jew to fail in this rite of purifying hands, was not a sin only, but a crime, punishable by the law. In depth of guilt, such a failure of duty was considered equal to fornication ; the case of Eleazar ben Chatzar being a favourite illustration of the sin. Eleazar refused to wash hands according to the ritual ; for which offence he was cast out from the Jewish church ; and, on dying in his impenitence, a piece of rock was laid upon his coffin, at once to mark his grave for dishonour, and to signify that his body was stoned by the holy law.

Against all these Pharisaic rules, injunctions, and exceptions, JESUS set his face. He said they were not of God. They were not found in the sacred books. They were not only superfluous, but mischievous, in so far as they deceived men into thinking the letter of equal virtue with the spirit.

JESUS told the people that these rules for washing hands were but idle legends ; the act which they regulated being a social custom, not a religious rite. To show them by example how little it concerned their welfare what kind of water they used, in what sort of vessel it was held, and in what quantity it was poured out, he allowed his disciples, when eating bread in public, to omit the rite altogether.

The Pharisees, following and watching him, came and said : "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders, for they wash not their hands when they eat bread ?"

JESUS answered them that their tradition was not in the law, but was in opposition to the law, in substance and in spirit. And turning to the multitude, he added :

"Now hear and understand : not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man ; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."

The Pharisees were much offended. One day he went

home with one of them to dine, and on entering the house, sat down and broke bread without waiting for the ewer to be emptied over his hands. The host began to chide, on which he said :

“Ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Give alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you.”

CHAPTER XLIX.

LIGHT OF THE GENTILES.

AFTER that day of tumult in the white synagogue, when so many of the Capernaum Jews parted from JESUS, and like their brethren of Nazareth began to seek his life, his labour moved more rapidly than before into its final stage : that of an open call to men of all tongues and races to the kingdom of God.

But if many fell off that day, some few remained stanch. Drawn to their Lord by love, and not by reason, the chosen twelve were fast learning to see with his eyes, to speak with his voice, to breathe in his spirit. These men, now ready to be tried in the fire, to be proved unto death, had seen their most cherished illusions fade into air ; yet they had not turned back from the Lord, and were now the pillars of his Church. Others, less strong in character and in faith, had been shaken by the aspect of affairs ; and even among those who stood nearest him, and appeared most true to him, some were stung to despair on hearing that they must preach salvation alike to Jew and Greek.

This thing was harder to them than eating bread with unwashed hands, than doing good on the Sabbath day.

JESUS was ceasing to be a good Jew in the only sense which they gave that name : a man conscious and proud of being a member of a chosen race, the salt of the earth, the one people for whom the sun shone, the harvests ripened, and the whole world had been made. Even those who

loved him in the flesh, often grieved over him in spirit ; for to them the Son of David appeared to be wanting in Hebrew pride. They blushed to find him talking with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. They grieved to see him lodge with the men of Sychar. They marvelled to hear him say that nations from the East and from the West should find rest with the patriarchs. All these things were dark to their narrow and clouded minds.

But if Peter and John, who stood by his side and shared in his counsels, could not see into the mysteries of his grace, how were the lost and untaught Galileans, red with the strife, drunk with the hope of Judas and his sons, to understand this gospel of peace and love? They could not. Such a doctrine as that of peace on earth and good-will to all men, was new to their ears, offensive to their pride. So when JESUS left Capernaum as he had left Nazareth, fearing for his life, to be henceforth a wanderer, no crowds of men ran after him, catching at his robe, and praying him to come back and dwell in their midst. The last time he had gone away from Capernaum the whole town followed him into the road, and the apostles prayed him to return, saying—"All men seek thee." Now, no men sought him ; except those Pharisees who would have scourged him with whips and bruised him with stones. Cast out from the synagogue and the city, he turned his face from the blue lake, going up into the hill country of Galilee, and beyond it into the Plain of Tyre, until the sharp quest of the sheliach should have died away.

To train his disciples for their public work, he made a long and difficult march on foot, mainly through the Greek and Phœnician territories ; setting out from Capernaum in May, when the sun is fierce, the herbage is burnt up, and the rivers have run dry ; continuing his course through the summer heats ; extending his travel from the plain of Sidon to the mountains of Gilead.

Our notes of these movements are brief and scant ; yet enough is recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark to show

that they comprised three journeys, occupying about six months.

In his first journey, JESUS passed down from the hills of Galilee, by way of the wadies flowing westwards to the sea, into the Plain of Tyre, where he sought shelter from his own people among the worshippers of Ashtoreth and Baal. In the first stage of his flight, he neither preached the gospel nor healed the sick ; but his fame having gone before him into those parts, a Gentile woman, a Syro-Phœnician, having a daughter a lunatic, ran after him in the road, crying with a loud voice for him to come into her house and heal her child.

To do so, would be to make himself known, to bring the Jews upon his track. The disciples, fearing to be discovered by their enemies, urged him to send her away. Turning to the poor woman, JESUS said gently :

“ I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of Israel.”

But she continued her prayer, crying, “ Lord help me !” until he turned to her again, saying :

“ Great is thy faith, O woman ! be it unto thee as thou wilt.”

This was the first instance of his divine power being used spontaneously to heal a Gentile ; for in that case of curing the centurion’s servant, the healing act was done, not in opposition to Jewish instincts and desires, but on the prayer of elders from the synagogue. Now, a Gentile woman was called into the Church, and the Jew’s pride, as one of an exclusive race, was dashed for ever to the earth.

In his second journey, JESUS passed into the Decapolis—region of the Ten Cities—a Greek League, of which Hippo, Gadara, Pella, and Scythopolis were then the chief places. This district of the Ten Cities lay about the southern shores of the Lake of Galilee, and on both banks of the lower Jordan, though the Greek cities were mainly built on its eastern side. Peopled by Greeks, or by men of Greek descent, this country offered JESUS a safe retreat, in which he might pursue his work in peace. In one place the people

brought to him a man who was dumb and had an impediment in his speech, which JESUS cured, telling them not to speak of it ; for he did not wish to excite and offend the Jews. But they talked of him all the more for this injunction ; a great crowd following him from the Greek cities, until the number rose into thousands ; when, being on the lake, in a desert place, he felt compassion for this multitude, and having made them sit down, he fed these Gentiles on a few loaves and fish, as in the early spring, within a dozen miles of that spot, he had fed the five thousand Jews.

Then he took boat and crossed the lake to Magdala, a village on the Galilean bank ; but he found no rest there ; for the Pharisees and Herodians, hearing that he had come over, pressed upon him with their perfidious questions, calling upon him to give them a sign of his Messiahship from heaven. JESUS, says St. Mark, sighed deeply in his spirit, as he answered them :

“Why doth this generation seek a sign? Verily I say unto you, no sign shall be given unto this generation.”

Sad in soul, he stepped into the boat ; so hastily that his disciples had no time to buy bread ; and put off from Magdala, the land of these Galileans, Herodians, and Separatists, for the Greek shore, where he might again find refuge from his countrymen in the stranger's land. When his disciples began to murmur at the lack of bread, and at the prospect of having to bake and eat unleavened loaves, he turned their thoughts to the higher question of the spiritual danger from which they were escaping :

“Take heed ; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod.”

In his third journey he travelled from the Ten Cities up the left bank of Jordan to its source ; pausing for a moment at Bethsaida-Julias, where he led the blind man out of the house and cured him ; climbing the hills into Paneas, now become the Greek city of Cæsarea Philippi ; reaching the limits of his march in one of the peaks of Hermon, the

mountain of the Transfiguration, where a special glory was to mark the foundation of his Church.

That leaven of the Pharisees, of the Herodians, had so far entered into the souls of men, that the stanchest of his disciples could not yet conceive how the kingdom of God could be other than a kingdom of the earth. They were growing up slowly towards the light : but growth is a work of time, of favouring soil, and of furthering sun and rain. When JESUS told them that his kingdom was not of the world, that he was never to assume an earthly crown, they could hardly believe that he spoke the truth. But as they wended along the base of Mount Hermon, he put them face to face with the highest fact :

“Whom do men say that I am?”

They answered him that men said he was John the Baptist come to life ; this error of the Galilean court being also an error of the Galilean synagogue and market-place ; but they added, “Some say Elias, and others one of the prophets.”

“But whom say ye that I am?”

Peter answered, “Thou art the Christ.”

As Christ then he told them that his time was nigh ; that he must now go up to Jerusalem ; that in place of being made a king of men, he would be rejected of the Sanhedrin and the people, as he had been rejected by the synagogues of Nazareth and Capernaum ; that he would be put to a shameful death, and on the third day would rise again from the dead. Peter, still strong in his Galilean tenets, still dreaming of an earthly sceptre, turned on JESUS, saying : “This shall not happen unto thee.”

Swiftly from JESUS came the rebuke of this carnal spirit :

“Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou art an offence unto me. For thou savourest not the things that be of God ; but those that be of men.”

Six days later, he took Peter, James, and John into the mountain, where he became transfigured before their eyes, his face shining like the sun and his garments becoming white as light.

CHAPTER L.

BETHANY.

TOWARDS the end of the fall, while the olives were being shaken from the trees and the grapes were being trodden in the wine-press, JESUS and his little band of disciples came back from the mountain of the Transfiguration to the lake country ; not to abide there any more ; but to rest for a few days ; to say adieu to old friends, and push on to the city in which the Son of Man was ordained to render up his life.

The harvest being got in, and the Feast of Tabernacles nigh, large companies of Jews were gathering about the lake, preparing to attend this feast ; making their journey to Jerusalem in caravans for safety against the Arabs ; and by way of the Jordan valley, so as to avoid touching Samaria and rendering themselves unclean. It was the way that JESUS had gone in his father's time. Now, he meant to attend this feast, but he kept his counsel as to how and when he should go up. To walk by this lower road, among these Jewish companies, would be to expose, in a mere broil, in a desert place, among unknown men, a life which it was part of his divine career that he should yield in the Holy City, after public process, under accusation of the high priest, and by sentence of the Roman governor, in the presence of a mighty concourse of Jews and Greeks. His death must be as evident to the world as his resurrection from the dead must be clear to his Church. So he allowed

his disciples to go up to Jerusalem by the caravan road ; and after they were gone away from Capernaum, he went up alone through the hill country of Samaria, by way of Shechem, Shiloh, and Bethel, the three sacred cities which preceded Zion as the selected Mounts of God.

Entering Jerusalem by the great suburb and the north gate, he would see, on his left hand, Bezetha, with its ridge of houses and synagogues, and the new palace built by Antipas Herod ; on his right hand, Gareb, with its gardens and villas, its place of public execution, and its occasional caves and tombs. Passing down the great street of the Cheesemonger's valley, and turning about midway in that street to his left, he would go from the city by the sheep gate (now called St. Stephen's), crossing the dry Cedron bed, and circling the west shoulder of Olivet, come through plantations of figs and olives to a small hamlet, two miles from Jerusalem, called Bethany (Beth-anyah, House of the Poor), where the caravan from Galilee stopped and where he had always lodged.

Sixty generations of men have come and gone since that day, yet Bethany is still the abode of poverty : a heap of stone sheds, mixed with some ruins, and peopled by a rabble of Arab peasants, too lazy to work, too abject to thieve. Only two miles from Jerusalem, only one mile from Galileans' hill, it is yet out of the world ; standing on a ledge of live rock ; looking down into the Cedron gorge, across to the opposite ridge of Abu Dis, then into the intricate maze of limestone hills which go dropping from shelf to shelf into the plain of the Dead Sea. A track from Jerusalem to Jericho winds through it, over slippery sheets of stone, on which horse or camel finds it difficult to keep his feet. A carob here, a fig tree there, make the absence of verdure more keenly felt.

The situation of Bethany, if lonely and exposed, is also commanding and picturesque. At the head of two wadies, covering the chief tracks through the wilderness, it is a needful outpost for Jerusalem, and must have been used as

a watch-tower from the earliest times. Some old foundations, of Jewish style and bevel, would seem to show that Bethany was one of those places on the desert edge in which the kings of Judah had built watch-towers to protect the wells. Around this tower poor people would creep and huddle; throwing up their booths and houses beneath its walls; and nothing is more likely in Palestine than that such a village should be called by the name of Bethany—House of the Poor.

These cowering Arabs still call it *El Azariyeh*, from the name of *Lazarus*; said in their country traditions to have been the village sheikh; very much as they call *Mohammed Arekât* the sheikh of *Abu Dis*. From what is told by *St. John*, it may be inferred that *Lazarus* was rich, well known, and of good repute: to wit from his dwelling in a large house, from his habit of receiving guests, from the costly unguents used by his sister, from his owning a rock-hewn sepulchre, from the concourse of Jews who came over to mourn for him when he died. He may have been all that these Arabs say; the sheikh of a poor village of lepers and paupers; in which case the excavated chamber now shown may have been his tomb.

The biggest ruin in Bethany is said to be that of the house in which *Lazarus* lived and *JESUS* lodged. The whole hamlet is a mound of dust and ashes; not one good house remaining with a roof above it. The little gardens, the little courts, are gone; nor does the eye of an observer rest on a single Saracenic dome. In many old walls the *lewan* is visible; but in every case the arch has been filled with rubble; for a *lewan* is only built in a good house, and its presence implies a court-yard, if not a bit of garden, with its fig-tree or its vine. The former dwellers in this Village of the Poor could hardly have been so abject as they seem to be now.

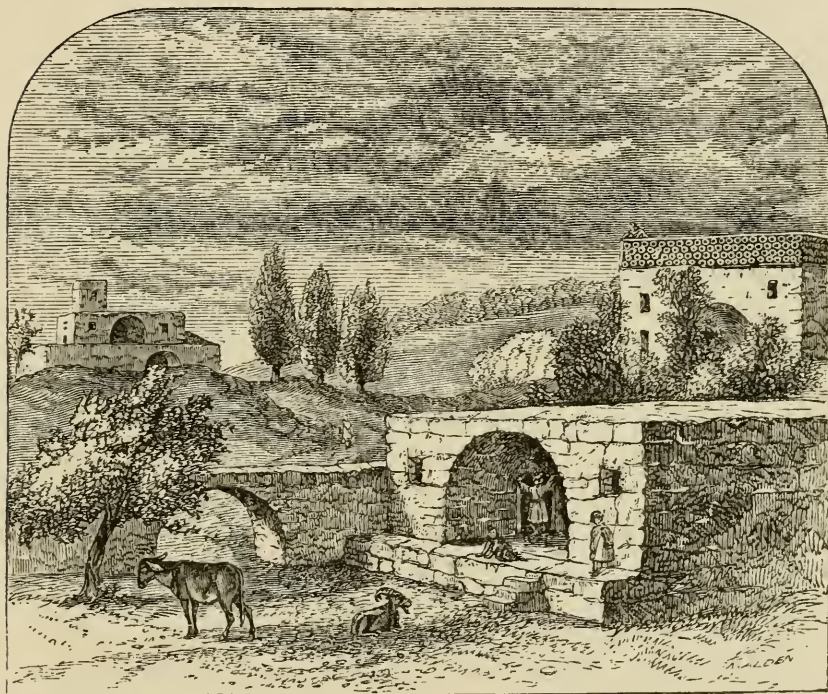
Still, some notion of the house of *Lazarus*, in which *Martha* and *Mary* lived, in which *Jesus* lodged during his visits to *Jerusalem*, may be got from these crumbling stones.

In Syria there is little change in either men or houses. As Abraham pitched his tent in Bethel, an Arab sheikh would now set up his camp; and much as David built his palace on Mount Zion, a Turkish pasha would now arrange his house. Whether he be prince or slave, Moslem or Jew, a Syrian eats and drinks, buys and sells, builds and plants, by an all but immutable law; a fact which renders the daily life of Palestine a continual illustration of the sacred text. In every street you see the hairy children of Esau squatting on the ground, and greedily devouring a mess like that for which the hunter sold his birthright. Along every road plod the sons of Rechab, men who drink no wine, plant no tree, enter within no door. At every khan you find the young men seated round the pan of parched corn, dipping their morsel into the dish. Job's plough is still used, and the seed is still trodden into the ground by asses and kine. Olives are shaken from the boughs as directed by Isaiah, and the grafting of trees is unchanged from the days of Paul. And so with the fashion in which a Syrian builds his shed, his synagogue, and his mosque. Not being an artist by nature, he has never been led astray from his primitive type.

A Syrian house is a stone tent, just as the temple was a marble tent. In changing the material of which it was made, a Hebrew camp did not change its name; but whether erected of canvas or of rock, it was always a beth, in Arabic a beit, expressing a tent, a house, an encampment, a town.

In form an oblong; in height some twelve or fifteen feet; a blank wall, broken by small square holes; a low roof, flat, with neither cornice nor chimney—such is the rude exterior of a Syrian house. Where there are two stories, the higher rooms may have windows covered with lattice-work, admitting the flow of air, but shutting out neighbouring eyes. No chamber can be seen from the street. In good houses there may be a kind of tower, called an upper room, on part of the roof; a cool and pleasant place, built like the

miradores and ventanas of the Moors. When a house has more than two tiers, as in the high parts of Jaffa, and in the crowded quarters of Zion, it will probably be found that one lodge has been raised on the top of another : the custom of this country, stronger than any code of laws, permitting a poor man who has no home of his own to erect a cage on



SYRIAN HOUSES.

his neighbour's roof, to burrow a den under his neighbour's floor, if he can only find a way into this lodging without passing through another man's gate.

In the houses of old cities, such as Hebron, Zion, and Nabulus, the flat roof, laid with a plaster of lime and sand, sometimes has a parapet of open tiles and clay ; a light, strong fretwork, three feet high, and going round the edge ; a screen which prevents children from falling off and women being seen. "When thou buildest a new house," said the

law, "then shalt thou make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy head if any man fall from thence." On the flat roof, within this guard of tiles, the Syrian females, shorn of their veils, their slippers, and their cloaks, spread maize to dry, feed doves and pigeons, and in the evening bathe and spin. It was on such a roof, so screened, that Bathsheba bared her bosom, on seeing which David fell into sin and crime.

In front of the house is the lewan ; a great arch and recess, answering to the doorway of an Arab tent. The lewan is often level with the ground, though a man who has to rear children as well as goats, will raise his floor a few steps above the open court in which his animals feed and lodge. This floor is covered, like the roof, with a thin layer of mud and lime.

On each side of the recess, a doorway opens on a room. In a big house, two or three rooms may extend from each wing : but this extension is rare : and every house that is more than a hole in the earth or a sty upon it, has a lewan in the centre, and an apartment on each flank. A piece of ground, enclosed by a hedge of rough stones, advances from the wings and bows out in front ; forming a little court or garden, in which there is commonly planted either a fig-tree or a vine. For three parts of the year, the lewan and the court are the real house of poor people ; the two rooms being rarely used. A Syrian household, father, son, and grandson, gather in the lewan, where, sheltered from the sun, yet open to the breeze, they cook and dine, smoke and sleep. Here the young damsels work and wash, while the poultry chuck and crow, and the infants crawl and fight. Except in the short rainy season, and during the few cold nights, people spread their mats and quilts, which our Bible calls their beds, either on the plaster floor or under the branching vine, and the whole family lie down together, father and mother, son and daughter, with their wives and husbands, and their brood of little folks. Knowing no shame, the darkness covers them with its robe. When

the night grows chill, and the fear of dysentery comes down upon them, they creep into one of their tiny rooms, closing the doorway with a hanging mat, just as their fathers closed the Tabernacle entrance with a veil.

Into those rooms a stranger rarely, if ever, enters. An outer stair leads up to the flat roof; and in the lewan itself a visitor hangs his lantern. The rooms are plain and empty; having none of the pretty trifles which adorn an English home. Books, pictures, vases, chairs, pianos, clocks, are never to be seen in a Syrian's house. The walls are bare; the floors are mud. A couch is laid along the wall; being a lounge by day, a bed by night. A lamp of red clay, a wooden stand, a cradle, a chibouque, a corn-mill, a cruse of water, make up the list of furniture. Most of the work is done away from home; either in the fields, in the bazaars, or in the sooks. A goldsmith has his forge, a cobbler his stall, a tailor his goose, in the bazaar; while a carpenter puts his bench and a barber his basin in the public way. A man's house is neither his workshop nor his place of reception, as it is so often with a Frank. Fear lest his women should be seen prevents a Syrian from bringing home his friends, except on the three or four grand solemnities of his life. Can he not see his brother in the mosque; his neighbour in the market? There is not much news to relate. When a new pasha comes to Damascus, when a Maronite sheikh burns a Druse village, when a Salhaan bandit murders and robs a Frank, can he not hear of it in the city gate?

It was in such a house; squat and bare, with an open roof, a plaster floor, a little court or garden; looking over the Wady Cedron, the Dead Sea, and the Moab mountains, that Martha and Mary lived, and that JESUS, on his visits to the Holy City, lodged.

Going every morning into Jerusalem to teach and preach, he walked back to Bethany in the afternoon, that he might sup and sleep among the poor. It is nowhere hinted that he stayed in Jerusalem a single night.

CHAPTER LI.

THE SANHEDRIN.

WHEN JESUS began to speak more openly of being sent down from heaven to save the world from death, the Temple courts in which he prayed and taught were filled with tumultuous crowds ; men who had come from all parts of Jewry to keep the feast, and were eager to see whether this JESUS of Nazareth was the Christ whom they had sought. Some believed in his words ; still more believed in his acts ; for in his last few weeks on earth, his miracles increased in number and in power.

The two great parties which divided Jewry treated these tumults in a different way.

If the Sadducees gave them any thought, it was only in so far as they disturbed the public peace. Having much to risk, and nothing to gain by change, the aristocratic party were anxious to keep things safe, so as to prevent any action on the side of Rome. Avoiding the mistake of Gratus, Pilate had left the priests alone ; so that Annas remained sagan, his son-in-law high priest ; and Annas being content, his partizans were calm. Having no expectations of a Messiah's kingdom, the rich and ancient families of Judea preferred a government of priests and nobles, supported by Roman legions, to the license of a new Judas of Gamala, and the exactions of a new Simon the slave. They cared nothing for the delusions of a mob ; but in the cause of public order, even these unbelieving Sadducees might act.

The Pharisees took other ground. As a body, they might have changed their demeanour towards JESUS even now, had he been willing to accept their policy ; that is to say, had he consented to declare himself a prince of their royal house, an upholder of the Separatist policy, an admirer of the Oral Law, a restorer of their independent rule ; in one word, a King of the *Jews*. But Jesus urged on them more than ever the necessity for adopting a new law, a new commandment, a new form of prayer, a new religious life. He profaned their Sabbath, he abolished their ceremonies, he decried their righteousness. When they found that he would make no terms with them, they went up to the Temple and laid a charge against him before the Sanhedrin, of preaching false doctrine and leading the people astray.

This Sanhedrin, the Great Council of Jewry, met in the Lishcath ha-Gazith (Paved-hall), the largest of many cells or chambers built on the Temple-hill, and used as offices for the guard and watch ; just as the domed houses under the high terrace of the rock are still used by the dervishes who watch and guard the holy Mosque. The Lishcath ha-Gazith seems to have stood on the great wall ; part of it being in the Israelites' court, part in the Gentile court, so as to admit of the entrance of Jew and Greek ; probably on the western side, facing towards Zion, near the most public entrance into the Temple courts.

The great council before whom the Pharisees laid this charge of false teaching against JESUS, consisted of seventy, seventy-one, perhaps seventy-two members, chosen by vote from among the wise, aged, and wealthy Jews, not of Jerusalem only, but of every city in which they dwelt, even from Egypt, Babylon, and Greece. Until the times of Herod the Great, the powers of this body had been royal and more than royal ; for the Sanhedrin professed to hold the keys of heaven no less than the sceptres of the earth. It was a court of appeal in all cases, civil and ceremonial, and its sentences were good for ever, unless they should be modified

by itself. No man was too great, no offence was too small, to come within its grasp. The members of this dread tribunal could elect and dethrone kings ; name provincial councils ; decide all questions of peace and war. They judged the offence of a guilty tribe, of a false prophet, of a bad high priest. They declared when an elder had become a rebel, when a Jewish city had been seduced ; announcing the crime and awarding the punishment. No army could march to battle without their license ; no addition to either court or city could be made in opposition to their voice. They, and they only, had power over life and death.

This body of men elected their own members and promulgated their own decrees. They made laws, and prescribed the spirit in which those laws should be received. They required from all Jews the most servile obedience. Any elder who dared to raise his voice against them was held to be worthy of death, and the schools and colleges taught the young men of Israel that if the Sanhedrin said black was white, that the left hand was the right hand, they were bound to believe the lie on pain of sin against God.

But the Sanhedrin's strength had been reduced : first by Herod the Great, afterwards by the Roman governors of Judea. Herod, on capturing Jerusalem, had seized the whole body of the Sanhedrin, thrown them into prison, and, with two illustrious exceptions, put them all to death. Around Hillel and Shammai, the men whom Herod had spared, a new council had been formed ; but the prestige of the Sanhedrin could never be restored. Pilate abridged their rights, taking from them more particularly the faculties of life and death ; yet even after they had lost the right to torture prisoners and stone offenders, they still exercised a vast authority in Jerusalem and in every other Jewish city.

Pilate himself could not dispute their jurisdiction over Jews, in whatever land they dwelt, as to all that concerned their faith, ritual, and education. They had the right to fix all festivals, to judge all doctrines, to expel sinners from the

Church, to regulate colleges and schools, to punish offenders against the law, so long as, in the exercise of their rights, they refrained from encroaching on the civil power. Their edicts went far and wide, and just as a Papal decree may smite a sinner in either Prague, Dublin, or New York, a word launched from the Lishcath ha-Gazith would chastise offenders in either Memphis, Babylon, or Rhodes. They could still condemn a man to death ; though they could only proceed to execution after their sentence had been confirmed by a Roman judge.

When this judge was a soldier like Pilate, a criminal whose sins were of a kind to baffle the shortcomings of Roman wit, would commonly be safe ; for the lives of his subjects belonged to Cæsar, and only at the will of Cæsar could they be taken away. Yet the case might easily occur in which, if the priests and people appeared to be united, the governor might yield to their prayers for the sake of peace. To preserve their faith intact was the business of Jewish doctors, not of Roman soldiers ; and seeing that the priests could be either useful allies or desperate enemies, to offend them, except on adequate grounds, was not the policy of Rome.

The Sanhedrin comprised three classes : priests, Levites, and ordinary Jews. The priestly element was strong. Caiaphas, being the official high priest, had a right to preside over their debates ; if he were not present in person, the chair was filled by Simeon, Rector of the Great College. Whoever filled the chair was considered as sitting in the seat of Moses. The vice-president was styled Father of the House of Judgment. Two secretaries sat on his right and left ; one for acquittals, one for condemnations ; while the remainder of the seventy magistrates seated themselves before him on the paved floor in the form of a great half moon.

On the charge of false teaching being laid against JESUS of Nazareth before the Sanhedrin, officers of that court went out to arrest him ; but these priestly guards came back into

the hall, saying that they dared not lay hands on him, for in listening to his words they had felt that no mere man ever spake as this JESUS spoke. All this time he was preaching in the Temple court, close to the Paved-hall; and the accusing Pharisees, vexed by this turn of the affair, demanded whether these officers had also been led astray by the Nazarene? They sneered at the rabble, as ignorant of the law, and asked to be told whether any great Pharisee, any member of the Sanhedrin, believed in this man?

There, they fancied they were safe. If the Great Council should prove to be of one mind, the officers would be sent out again, and made to arrest the Teacher; but when the court was called on to speak, they found that the Elders were not all of one mind. Nicodemus, a priest, a kinsman of Hillel, rose and put the question :

“Does our law judge any man before it hears him and knows what he does?”

The turn which Nicodemus gave to the debate appears to have been this: the Pharisees had made a charge, but they had offered no evidence in support of it. Could the court proceed without proof? To arrest a man was to accuse him; and what evidence of crime would the Sanhedrin be in a position to lay before a Roman judge?

Surprised at a defence of JESUS by a kinsman of Hillel, the accusers cried out upon Nicodemus: “Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look; for out of Galilee cometh no prophet.” How little they knew of their own sacred books! The greatest of prophets since the time of Moses, Elijah the Tishbite, had come out of Galilee.

Until evidence was laid before it, the Council could take no further steps; and JESUS went on preaching and teaching; vexing the Pharisaic mind by openly sitting down to meat with sinners and by doing good deeds on the Sabbath. He taught his followers a new prayer, in which they were to ask forgiveness of God only so far as they forgave their fellow-men. He stood in the Temple court and told the people a story of a Good Samaritan. A good Samaritan! On the

Sabbath next after that scene in which Nicodemus saved him from arrest by the Sanhedrin, he exasperated his accusers by curing the blind man.

But JESUS held his course. Every day he came in from Bethany through the olive plantations to pray and teach. Standing in Solomon's Porch, and looking towards Olivet, he told the people he was the Son of God, sent down by the Father to save the world. A shout went up from the Pharisees against him; the man blasphemed, they said; and as their rulers of the Great Council gave them no help, they caught up stones and would have bruised him to death, but that he withdrew from their sight as he had done in Nazareth, going straight through the crowd and out of the Temple court unseen.

CHAPTER LII.

BOTH SIDES OF JORDAN.

PASSING from Solomon's Porch into the Cedron valley, JESUS went through the white graveyards, and by way of Olivet, to his lodgings in Bethany ; where, the house of Lazarus being well known to the Jews, and only two miles distant from Moriah, it was no longer safe for him to dwell. A daily tumult would have surged about the door ; some men shouting to make him King, while others were plotting to take his life ; and his hour being still to come, he took leave of Martha and Mary, dropping down the Wady el Haud towards the Jordan.

To go down this road, as JESUS went down, on foot and with a company of men, made a journey of two days. A mile below Bethany, in a wild glen, they came upon a little spring of pure water, then called En-Shemesh, and now known to travellers and pilgrims as the Apostles' Fountain. Between that spring on the hill-side and Jericho in the great plain, there was only one spot in which a man could find shade and drink : the half-way house, the khan at which caravans rested and travellers slept for the night.

In going to and fro, between Galilee and Judea, JESUS must have often lodged in the arches of this khan. The wild glen, the desert country dividing two rich cities, offered every temptation to daring thieves, and nothing was more usual than for the people lodging at this inn for the night to see unhappy men who had been robbed, disabled, and

left in the sun to die. Such a sight may have suggested the parable of the Good Samaritan, spoken in the Temple court: for the Lord's habit was to illustrate moral truths by circumstances which were as familiar to his hearers as light and air.

Where stood this way-side khan? The site should not be far to seek. A Syrian khan is a thing not easily lost: and in this case of the Good Samaritan's inn, nature and art combine to indicate the spot, within certain limits. It stood about midway in the descent from Bethany to Jericho, in a position commanding a view of the road, above and below. As for ten months in the year no rain flows down the wady, the khan must have been built near a copious spring. Here then, are three bold marks to control the search: a midway position, a high ridge, a deep well. Again, the inn must have been a big edifice, capable of housing large caravans: and from what we can still see of the style in which Jewish khans were built, it ought to have left, when perishing of neglect, some traces of its grandeur in the desert dust. Are any such traces to be found?

Yes. On the very spot where search would be made for them, if no such ruins were suspected of existing, stands a pile of stones, archways, lengths of wall, which the wandering Arabs call the Khan Houdjar, and still make use of as their own resting-place for the night. These ruins are those of a noble inn; the lewan, the fountain, and the court, being plainly traceable in the ruins. The walls are solid, the well is deep. That a half-way house from Jerusalem to Jericho stood on this ridge, looking over the limestone wastes above it and below, can hardly admit of doubt. Where, then, if not here, shall we seek the Good Samaritan's inn—the site of that khan in which JESUS lodged? Where, if not here, shall we find a central position, with a commanding mound, a ruined inn, and an abounding well?

Early on the second day of his journey, JESUS would reach the City of Palms, and crossing the Ford into Perea, would find himself in the dominions of Antipas Herod, comparatively free and safe.

In its lower course, the sacred stream divided the Roman province of Judea from the semi-independent province of Perea, as in its upper course it parted Galilee from Trachonitis. The eastern bank lying in another country to the western, a man living near the Ford had the privilege of being able to select his own time for accepting any process of arrest ; unless, indeed, Herod, who was still conducting operations on the desert frontier against Aretas, should think proper to give him up to Pilate ; an event unlikely to occur, even if Pilate could be persuaded to ask it, since it was well known in Jewry that the procurator was on very bad terms with the prince. Pilate had been the cause of a great crime, which Antipas considered, and justly considered, an infringement of his sovereign rights. This offence, known in history as the Massacre of the Galileans, is connected both in its origin and in its results with the foundation of our Church.

Of the Jewish sects which troubled Pilate's repose, that of Judas of Gamala appeared to his mind the most criminal, since the Galileans, persuaded that Cæsar's reign in Syria must be short, were always getting ready for a brush with the Roman troops. Lapse of time, instead of cooling their passions, only fanned the fire into flame. Every year, as they went up from Galilee to Jerusalem at the time of Purim and Passover, they imagined that their day had come. How long, O Lord, how long ? was the Galilean's daily prayer, as he received the water of ablution on his palm. In every street fight, in every Temple riot, he was the first to attack, the last to retreat. Day by day he became less careful to avoid offending those soldiers who garrisoned Antonia and guarded the city gates. When Pilate hung up some brazen shields as trophies, his were the prompt hands to pluck them down. Very bad blood was excited between the legionaries and these provincials, needing no more than a pretext to explode into murderous strife. The day of collision had come when Pilate, eager to distinguish his reign in Judea by erecting public tanks for the comfort of rich and poor, began to build one of those noble aqueducts which in every part of

the empire imitated, if they could not pretend to rival, the conduits pouring rivers of water into Rome. This aqueduct was to have been twenty-five miles in length; being a longer and perhaps a finer work than the Aqua Julia.

Wanting funds to execute this mighty scheme, Pilate employed the Corban—the money laid up in the Temple as given to God; Caiaphas either consenting to this public employment of public money, or agreeing to make no stir in the affair.

But the mob of Separatists, excited to madness by Pilate's appropriation of these sacred funds, gathered in thousands and in tens of thousands, before the palace gate, demanding that the waterworks should be stopped, the corban restored; clamouring with voice and gesture; cursing alike the aqueduct and the man who made it. The Roman general, not to be governed by a mob, sent a company of legionaries into the streets and the Temple courts, having cloaks over their armour, and orders to set upon these rioters and beat them down with staves. But the passions of his men being roused by previous insult and present opposition, the soldiers drew their short swords, and charging upon these Galilean rioters, threw them to the ground, trampled on them, drove them to the altars and into the shops for protection, so that many fell under their gashes and still more under the feet of their escaping countrymen. The Temple court was strewn with dead, whose blood was said to have mingled that day with the blood of the sacrificial goats and lambs.

Peace was restored to Jerusalem by this murder of unarmed men. Though the innocent had been butchered with the guilty, no stir was made by the priests, no complaint by the Sanhedrin; for these Galileans, strangers in Jerusalem, rioters, provincials, had few friends and many foes, and fear of Cæsar weighed heavily upon all men's minds. Even to the Lord's disciples, this slaughter of their countrymen was a cause of secret joy. Peter and John could not grieve over the fate of enemies whom they appear to have considered as being overwhelmed by a

judgment from heaven. When, safe in Perea, they spoke of this massacre in the Temple court, JESUS turned to them and said :

“Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell ye, nay : but except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish.”

Antipas Herod, while operating against Aretas and the desert tribes, received the news of this slaughter of his people. Pilate excused the crime by saying that his soldiers in their fury had used their swords instead of using their staves ; an explanation which in no degree mollified the Tetrarch's wrath ; other events of his life having quickened into morbid activity his fear of still further encroachments on the part of Rome.

Under the safeguard of these suspicions and animosities between the two rulers, JESUS could remain near the Ford ; preaching to the crowds who followed him from Jericho and the hamlets of Perea ; and waiting for the time of the great Feast, when he proposed to go up with the Galilean caravan to Jerusalem and accept his appointed crown of thorns.

When JESUS had been living five weeks in Perea, news came down from Martha and Mary that their brother Lazarus lay sick and likely to die ; on hearing which He told his disciples that he must go up into the hill-country for a little while. “But the Jews will stone thee,” they objected. Then he told them that Lazarus was dead ; and that he should be raised again to life, to the intent that they might all believe in the Son of God. Some were afraid, remembering how the Galileans had been slain, and how JESUS had been threatened with stones, until Thomas the Twin spake boldly to his fellows, saying, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

After resting two days in Perea, they clomb the wady towards Jerusalem, staying the third night at the great desert khan, the Good Samaritan's inn, and coming nigh to Bethany on the fourth day after Lazarus died. Then was performed the most imposing of many miracles ; performed

in open day, in a public place, on the body of a great person, in the presence of many Jews. At a word Lazarus came forth from the sepulchral vault.

Many of those who had come from Jerusalem to mourn with Martha and Mary, stayed with him and believed in JESUS ; others ran over Olivet to the Temple courts, spreading the news of his having come back, and of his having raised the dead man whom they all knew to life.

The high priests, hitherto so calm, appear to have grown uneasy about the public peace. A meeting of the Sanhedrin being called to consider these reports, Caiaphas went over from his palace on Zion to the Lishcath ha-Gazith to preside. As official high priest he had a right to the chief seat ; but in what he laid before the elders he must be taken as speaking, not only for himself, but for Annas, for the Sadducees, and for all those politicians who leaned on Rome. Details are not given, but his line of argument is suggested by St. John. People were expecting a Messiah ; one who could command the secrets of nature, who could free them from the stranger's yoke ; and a man who was reported to have raised the dead to life would be sure to draw away the multitude, to excite disturbance, and bring on their city and nation the wrath of Rome. Caiaphas said nothing about false teaching ; for what would a philosophic Sadducee care whether a mob of dyers and porters believed in a resurrection, in rewards and punishments, or not ? But Caiaphas had faith in the power of Cæsar, and a riot in Jerusalem meant to him a visit from Pilate, an addition to the garrison, perhaps a change of high priests. He hinted that though they had lost much by tumults, they might lose yet more. Was it was not better that one man should die, than that a whole people should be swept away ?

Then the Sanhedrin agreed to consider JESUS a dangerous man, a disturber of the public peace. Orders to arrest him were given, and every one who knew of his coming and going was warned to send news of it to Caiaphas.

To avoid this proclamation until his time should come,

JESUS left Bethany and the living witness of his power ; going first to Ephraim, a place on the edge of the Wilderness of Judea, eight or nine miles from Jerusalem, on the north, near Salem and those Springs at which he had parted from John the Baptist ; making thence a secret and obscure journey, through a part of Samaria, perhaps of Galilee ; passing thence to the lower Jordan and the Ford from which he had first set out.

Spies from the Sanhedrin met him in Perea, where they had so little power to hurt him that they condescended to guile and fraud. They spread a report that Antipas Herod, troubled by the Arab war, was eager to seize and put him to death ; but he answered them by a saying that he should not perish out of Jerusalem. Then they came to him with the question : as to whether a man could put away his wife for every cause ? This point of law was mooted in the schools of Hillel and Shammai : more important still, it was the chief practical question then being debated in Herod's court. Citizens argued it in gates, and soldiers wrangled over it in camps. John the Baptist had lost his head for it. Aretas had declared war upon it. But JESUS, seeing the snare they laid for him, answered them not as a partizan of either Herod or Aretas, but as a teacher of moral truth—that man and wife are one flesh, joined together by God, never again to be separated except by sin against the marriage-bond—by that crime of adultery which corrupts and severs the sacred tie, like death itself, without the intervention of human laws.

A time was now coming when JESUS would meet such snares, not with this lofty and patient wisdom, but with the resignation of one who is about to die.

Early in April, while the corn was still waving and the palms were in flower, the caravan arrived at the Ford from Galilee, on its way up to Jerusalem for the Passover : with it, apparently, the Virgin-mother, the holy women, and many of those disciples in whose presence it was right that he should suffer death ; so that many witnesses who knew him

in the flesh could testify his return to life. With them he crossed the Jordan for the last time; marching over the burning plain and under the branching dates to Jericho at the mountain base. This Jericho of to-day—a hedge of briers, a dozen round huts, two copious springs, a beck of water, a square stone pound, a patch of swamp, a ruined aqueduct, a mound of earth in which may lie column and statue, a handful of men, neither Jews nor Arabs, but a peculiar people, small in size, moon-faced, blue in tint, tattooed, and women who are soft and winsome, like the Egyptian almeh in style and figure—is not the Jericho into which Jesus marched with the Galilee caravan.

Jericho was a City of Palaces, smothered in balsams and scented shrubs. Cleopatra loved it. Herod the Great lived in it and died in it. Its towers, its gates, and theatres might have won the prize from Cæsarea and Ptolemais. Gardens of oranges, dates, and pomegranates extended from its ramparts on every side; a circus stood beyond the wall; a college flourished within; a town adding the charms of a Nilotic climate to the artistic beauties only to be derived from Greece. This shining city was no fit home, not even for a night, of poor Galilean boatmen, carpenters, and potters; men who drove their own asses, baked their own bread, drew their own water, and either carried their own tents or slept on the bare ground. So the caravan of pilgrims marched through the city, in by one gate, out by another; the women seated on asses, the men and lads trudging beside them, bearing sprigs of myrtle and fronds of palm; the whole company singing hosanna as they wound their way past the portico of Herod and the temple of Zeus. In the western suburb of this royal city they encamped.

JESUS passed through the streets with this caravan: not staying in the Greek city; but on its skirt, in the house of Zacchæus, whom he called from the sycamore tree.

Zacchæus was a member of a class, Jewish by birth, Roman by adoption, whom their countrymen called sinners; that is to say, not men who were leading an immoral life,

but who openly discarded the precepts of their Oral Law. Like St. Matthew, he was a taxing-man, a servant of the State, having dealings with the Gentiles, which rendered him ceremonially unclean. JESUS called him from the tree ; spoke softly to him ; went home with him to be his guest ; circumstances over which some of the multitude mourned and murmured, saying, he had gone to lodge in a house that was defiled. As yet, they could not see how much of their Oral Law, with its fancies and traditions, had been swept away. Even among the Twelve, strange doubts appeared to remain ; for when JESUS told them his hour was nigh, they imagined that he was at length going up to Jerusalem to assume his earthly crown, and they began quarrelling among themselves as to which of them should sit on his right hand, which on his left. Again, he had to rebuke their pride ; again he had to tell them that in his kingdom the highest office was that of being the servant of all.

Next day, being Thursday, the caravan moved up the wild and steep ascent of the wilderness ; first climbing up the Wady Kelt, along a Roman road ; then rounding the shoulders of stony hills, here and there speckled with grass and shrubs ; toiling up, higher and higher, through desolate glens, in which the bandit and the panther lurked, until sundown brought them to the desert khan—the Good Samaritan's inn. Early next day on foot, the caravan would reach Bethany about the hour of noon ; and there, in the house of Martha and Mary, among the outcast and the poor of Israel, JESUS took up his abode for the Holy Week.

CHAPTER LIII.

GATHERING FOR THE FEAST.

COMING into Bethany, the nearest point of the great road to Galileans' hill, the caravan would break up, the company dispersing to the south and north ; some seeking for houses in which they could lodge ; others fixing upon the ground where they meant to encamp. Those marched round Olivet to the south, following the great road, crossing the Cedron by a bridge, and entering the Holy City by the Sheep gate, near Antonia ; these mounted by the short path to the top of Olivet, glancing at the flowers and herbage, and plucking twigs and branches as they climbed. Some families, having brought their tents with them from Galilee, could at once proceed to stake the ground ; but the multitude were content with the booths called Succoth, built in the same rude style as those in which their father Israel dwelt.

Four stakes being cut and driven into the soil, long reeds were drawn, one by one, round and through them ; these reeds, being in turn crossed and closed with leaves, made a small green bower, open on one side only ; yielding the women a rude sort of privacy, and covering the young ones with a frail defence from both noontide heat and midnight dew. The people had much to do, and very little time in which it could be done. At sundown, when the shofa sounded, Sabbath would begin ; then every hand must cease its labour, even though the tents were unpitched, the booths unbuilt, the children exposed, the skies darkening

into storm. Consequently, the poles must be cut, the leaves and branches gathered, the tents fixed, the water fetched from the wells, the bread baked, the cattle penned, the beds unpacked and spread, the supper of herbs and olives cooked, before the shofa sounded from the Temple stair. But every one helped. While the men drove stakes into the ground and propped them with stones, the women wove them together with twigs and leaves, the girls ran off to the springs for water, the lads put up the camels and led out the sheep to graze. In two or three hours a new city had sprung up on the Galileans' hill ; a city of booths and tents ; more noisy, perhaps more populous, than even the turbulent city within the walls.

This Galileans' hill made only one field in a great landscape of booths and tents. All Jewry had sent up her children to the feast ; and each province arrayed its members on a particular site. The men of Sharon swarmed over Mount Gibeon, the men of Hebron occupied the Plain of Rephaim. From Pilate's roof on Mount Zion, the lines and groups of this vast encampment could be followed by an observer's eye down the valley of Gihon, peeping from among the fruit-trees about Siloam, dotting the long plain of Rephaim, trespassing even on the Mount of Offence, and darkening the grand masses of hill from Olivet towards Mizpeh. All Jewry seemed to be encamped about the Temple mount.

From sundown all was quiet on the hill-sides and in the valley ; only the priests and doctors, the Temple guards, the money-changers, the pigeon-dealers, the bakers of shew-bread, the altar-servants, being astir and at their work. There was no Sabbath in sacred things. But everywhere, save in the Temple courts, traffic was stayed, movement arrested, life itself all but extinct.

On this Sabbath-day, the last that JESUS was to spend on earth, He took his disciples to dine at the house of Simon the Leper : a thing most sternly forbidden by that ceremonial law which he had come to fulfil and supersede.

A leper was then considered as a man abandoned by God. The Greek poets, the Persian magi, the Egyptian priests, all taught this doctrine of the Jewish rabbins; that the leper was accursed, and his affliction a sign of the celestial wrath. In some few cases (if modern experience of the malady in Jerusalem may be trusted) the disease may have been nature's own penalty for secret sin; but in many cases, especially among the poor, it was a misfortune rather than a punishment. For in a dry climate, under a burning sun, among a people living in the open wastes, eating their food in the streets, sleeping in dusty caves and in the shade of trees—a people who have little water, and who rarely bathe—it is all but impossible for a poor man to keep the pores of his skin free and open; yet when the grit which blows into his face, and the dirt which gathers on his body have choked up those pores, a train of disorders—itch, abscess, scurvy, freckles, fungus, raw flesh, elephantiasis, cancer, vitiligo, ulceration—may come on. All these affections of the skin may be leprous. In the days of Exodus, when leprosy was thought to be contagious and incurable, the law was made excessively severe against the unhappy wretches so afflicted with disease, and nothing had been done by the schools of Hillel and Shammai to soften the severity of that ancient code.

The leper was not regarded as a living man. He was dead to the law, dead to civil life, dead to the Temple service. He could not enter into a synagogue, into a friend's house, into a public place. He was compelled to go about bare-headed; to dress in a condemned garb; and to wail as he went along the warning cry—Unclean! Unclean! As a dead body could not be kept in Jerusalem for a single night, so a leper, being dead to the Law, was thrust out from the city gates—out into Hinnom and Jehoshaphat, into the valley of Gehenna and the valley of Death. This miserable being sought a refuge among the peasants' huts, and in the caves of the wilderness. One at least of these outcasts found a home in Bethany, Village of the Poor.

It was to this sufferer's house that JESUS went with his disciples on the Sabbath day. It was at this outcast's table that Christ was anointed for the sepulchre.

Martha served at the table ; and while they sat at meat, Mary opened a box of ointment, made of liquid nard, and poured it on the head of JESUS, over which it ran down his body even to his feet. Judas Iscariot grumbled at this waste, even though the gift was Mary's, saying the box might have been sold for three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor. Judas, son of Simon, the last and lowest of the Twelve, was a Jew of Judea, not of Galilee ; a man close and secret, fond of money and of power ; inclined to Essenic views and habits ; a narrow bigot in heart and brain. His office among the brethren was not to teach and preach, but to carry the bag, to pay the bills for food and lodging, to dispense alms to the needy. The fund was perhaps getting low in his purse ; for they had been living much in the desert ; making many quick journeys from place to place, followed by swarms of the poor and ailing, whom they were often obliged to feed. That box of unguent would have sold for three hundred denarii ; a large addition to his chest. A denarius was a silver coin ; the size and value of a Tuscan lira ; eight-pence of our English money. It was a labourer's wages, and something above a soldier's pay. Three hundred denarii made ten pounds ; a very large sum in the miser's eyes.

When JESUS rebuked him for his blindness in not seeing that Mary was anointing her Master's body for the tomb, Judas rose from the table in a rage, went out from the Leper's house, and going over the hill to Jerusalem, sought that High Priest who had commanded every one to denounce JESUS, and on finding him, offered to betray his Lord to the Sanhedrin for thirty shekels ; being less than half the price which Mary had poured in ointment upon his head.

Next day, about the hour of noon, a day to be known in his Church for ever as Palm Sunday, Christ and his

followers set out from Bethany, JESUS riding on an ass's colt, a symbol of his sacred office. On the way they met a multitude of men and women coming out to them from Jerusalem, all eager to see the man who had raised Lazarus from the dead ; and, as their fashion was, carrying palms in their hands and singing hosannas in the highest as they swept along. Meeting the crowd coming from Bethany, they paused, and came back with them round the hill, waving their green boughs and chanting their noble psalms.

As they were turning the south side of Olivet, just before the road sinks down towards the Cedron, the great city, with its Temple, palaces, and towers, burst upon their view ; the procession halted ; every voice being hushed before that majestic picture ; and gazing on the doomed metropolis of his people, JESUS wept.

“ If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side ; and shall lay thee with the ground, and they shall not leave in thee one stone standing on another.”

Crossing the Cedron, JESUS entered Jerusalem by the Sheep gate, and having gone for a little while into the Temple courts, he returned to Bethany for the night.

Monday and Tuesday, he came early to the Temple ; mixing among the people, restoring sight to the blind, and preaching to the poor. On Tuesday, certain members of the Sanhedrin came into the court where he was preaching, to question him and collect evidence against him ; being sent by the Council after Judas had been closeted with the high priest. They found JESUS among a crowd of Baptists, followers of his cousin John ; and they demanded of him by whose authority he taught ? It was a question in which Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Boëthusians, Sethians, could all concur ; the Sanhedrin in which all the princes sat being the sole judge of doctrine, without whose license no

man had a right to teach. Christ answered these Elders of the Sanhedrin by asking them the question whether John's baptism was of heaven or of man ; which they dared not meet with an open yea or nay ; for if they said of heaven, he would have asked them why they did not receive him ; and if they said of man, the multitude might have stoned them. So the chief Elders of the Sanhedrin had to confess before all these people that they could not say whether John was sent of man or of God !

Then each party in the Council put a question for itself ; in the hope of finding him at fault.

The Pharisees, against whom he appealed to the sacred books, brought to him a woman taken in the act of adultery ; a crime which the Mosaic law punished with death. Under the influence of their Greek teachers, the Jews had very much softened towards such an offender ; trial by the waters of jealousy had become rare ; and the Sanhedrin was on the point of abolishing for ever a punishment which the people had ceased to crave. Adultery was not capital under the Roman law, and Pilate would have seized as a murderer any man who should have stoned the woman to death. Their case seemed one which would compel JESUS to offend against either Moses or Rome ; but he baffled their cunning device by turning to the witnesses of her crime, and bidding the man who was innocent among them cast the first stone at her.

The Herodians tried to ensnare him on the question of paying tribute ; a point as fiercely contested among the Jews as either a physical resurrection or an advent of Elias. A Jew had two kinds of tribute to pay ; a tax to God and a tax to Cæsar ; neither of which was paid without much dispute. Whether the Temple tax should be forced or free had long been debated between the Separatists and Sadducees ; a question like that of church-rates in England ; but the Separatists, carrying their project into the Sanhedrin, after a debate renewed and adjourned during eight days, had gained their point. The tax had been laid ; a

half-shekel ; to be paid in the sacred coin ; levied on the first of Adar (end of January, early in February) ; receivable at the feast of Purim ; finally due on the first of Nizan (March or April) ; the fund being applied to the purchase of fire-wood, incense, shrew-bread, and scapegoats, and to the payment of servants, guards, and priests. It was a popular tax, and had been carried against the aristocrats by a popular vote. Not so the Roman poll-tax, on which the same divisions had taken place. Here the Sadducees had been for payment, the Separatists for resistance. Happy in their high places, the priests, the magistrates, were accused



SACRED SHEKEL.

of caring more for this world than they cared for God. But these men, knowing that societies cannot be governed without cost, knowing also that unless the people were induced to pay tribute their houses would be entered, their goods confiscated, and their persons seized, had counselled submission for the sake of peace. Joazar, the Boëthusian High Priest, had taken the lead in advising his flock to pay ; a course in which he had been seconded by Hillel and supported by all the moderate Pharisees. The tax, a denarius, had been levied ; the Jews had learned to bear it ; all except the Galileans, who spurned these lessons of placemen and cowards, continuing to denounce the impost as a sign of bondage, and the man who paid the denarius as a slave. The Separatist paid it under protest and remonstrance. It was an unpopular tax, and one who courted the multitude would hardly dare to defend it.

On this view of their case the Herodians spoke. If JESUS

should deny the tribute he offended Pilate; if he should approve it, he put their duty to Cæsar on a level with their duty to God.

They approached him softly, saying :

“Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth; neither carest thou for any man, for thou regardest not the persons of men. Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not?”

They did not know that he had met this question, not as a mere phrase, but as a practical human fact; that he had acknowledged the Roman right to raise funds; that he had dwelt in the house of one tax-man, and chosen another as one of the Twelve. He said to the Herodians :

“Show me the tribute money. Whose is this image and superscription?”



ROMAN DENARIUS.

“Cæsar’s.”

“Render therefore to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.”

Then the Sadducees came up, tempting him with questions of the Resurrection, a doctrine in which they themselves had no belief. Since the theory of a physical return to life sprang up in Jewry, the Sadducees, making merry with the vulgar creed, had proposed the question as to which of two brothers who married the same woman could claim her at the resurrection for his wife. The schools were divided by this debate; for on one side it was urged that the first man would plead the right of an original contract; on the other that this right would be considered

as having been lost by the failure of issue ; and that the woman would be judged as belonging to the father of her child. The Great College took note of a question which led to many jealousies and bickerings ; and the rabbins ultimately pronounced that the elder brother could claim the rising woman as his wife.

This problem the Sadducees brought to JESUS ; saying that a woman among them had been married to seven husbands, and requiring to know from him whose wife she would be in the world to come. JESUS answered them :

“ In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage ; but are as the angels of God in heaven.”

Confounded by the new light in which he put their case, the jesting Sadducees retired ; and the Pharisees, happy in this rebuke of their aristocratic rivals, came once more to the front with a fresh question. One of their body, a doctor of the law, inquired of JESUS—which was the great commandment ? This was another moot point in the schools. Moses had put the fear of God first, the love of man second. But this order of ideas had fallen into dispute. The Sadducees, rejecting a future life, conceived that the better part of righteousness consisted in man’s conduct to man. A moderate party among the Pharisees favoured a doctrine which appeared to encourage virtue and to promote peace ; and to this party Hillel lent the weight of his name when he declared in the Great College that doing as one would like to be done by was the whole law, the rest being only legend and commentary. But the main body of the Separatists, together with the Essenes, the Galileans, and other ardent sects, regarded the social virtues as of little or no account ; the highest of them being of far less value in the sight of Heaven than the meanest ceremonial rite. For what was man in the sight of God ? Dust and ashes, scum of the earth, froth of the sea, vapour of the sky. God was everything, man was nothing. All these men held that the first commandment was not only the greatest, but of higher significance than all the rest.

JESUS raised the question above all these wrangles of the schools by his answer to this Pharisaic doctor :

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength ; this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

CHAPTER LIV.

OLIVET.

WHEN JESUS turned away from the Temple court, leaving this holy mount for the last time, one of the Twelve, a Jew, and proud of the great works going on around him, bade the Lord look at the mason's art expended on wall and colonnade ; at the huge stones of the foundations, twenty feet, thirty feet, long ; at the columns and cloisters of pure white marble ; at the halls and chambers, solid as the living rock. Crowds of artists were labouring on the pile ; building the hhanoth, polishing the shafts, inlaying the floors, finishing the stairs. A nation's wealth was being lavished on the Temple hill ; an offering of stone to One who required from the Jews the sacrifice of a regenerate life.

JESUS gazed on this goodly work, the pride of Herod, the glory of Annas, and then turning to his disciple, said :

"Seest thou these great buildings ? There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."

Quitting the Temple, the company went down from the city by the Sheep gate into the Cedron bed, and crossing the hollow near the garden of Gethsemane, they walked in the cool evening over the brow of Olivet, through the Galilean camp. On the hill-top, within sight of Moab, Zion, Ramah, and the Dead Sea, they sat down together for the last time on that sacred spot. They sat over against

the Temple mount ; that is to say, with their backs to the Dead Sea, their eyes turned towards Jerusalem.

The scene on which they gazed in the waning light, was one that even apart from the interest derived from its sacred history, had no equal on the earth. Where else could they have sought a great city far from either sea or river and seated among the highest peaks of a mountain land ? Where else could they have seen such heights as Zion and Moriah, populous with life, swept round by such grand ravines as Gihon, Hinnom, and Jehoshaphat ? Where else could they have found this double spectacle of a festive city within the walls, and a second festive city encamped about it in booths and tents ?

Low down at their feet lay the Cedron bed, dry and stony, flowing through ranges of graveyards into the desert, on its way into the Dead Sea ; the ledges of hill dropping down to this dry brook being terraced for vineyards and olive woods, and dotted with men and herds. The ravine through which the Cedron flowed was dark, and the bare rock on its sides was shaped into the monuments of forgotten priests and kings. Midway down this ravine, stood the little garden called Gethsemane, meaning Old Presses, in which grew some aged olives. A mile lower down, where the river bed opened and brightened into verdure, lay the busy fountain of Siloam and its ruined tower. Beyond the whole length of this sombre valley, quick and high rose the scarp of Moriah, the Temple hill, with its magnificent breast of wall ; a wall of which the stones could be seen from the opposite hill, so that a man might have counted the tiers and told off the mason's work ; here the grand art of Solomon, marked with the Tyrian bevel ; there the more hasty labour of Nehemiah, showing columns of porphyry and serpentine flung into the mass ; the whole riveted and topped with the less solid but more regular masonry of Herod the Great.

Above this strong line of wall stood Solomon's Porch ; over which, tier on tier of marble, rose the Gentile court,

the Israelite court, the Women's court, the Priests' court, with their colonnades, stairs, and chambers ; and, crowning these terraces, stood the Temple proper, the Holy of Holies, with its front and cressets of burning gold.

Right of the Temple, joined to its courts by a colonnade, frowned the castle of Antonia ; one of the two great centres of Roman power. Away to the right of Antonia, on the same ridge of hill as the sacred buildings, though divided from them by a natural dyke, spread the great suburb of Bezetha ; already a city in the magnificence of its houses, palaces and courts ; conspicuous among which rose the palace of Antipas Herod, now swarming with his household and his guards. As yet this suburb lay beyond the walls. Behind this first ridge of the city, dropped the Cheese-monger's valley, parting it from the ridge of Zion ; in which valley lay the Xystus, the great bridge, the Maccabean palace, with mansions and gardens unseen from the place on which JESUS sat ; but beyond this valley sprang the majestic hill of Zion, rising higher than the Temple roof, so that the inhabitants could glance down into the Israelite and the Gentile courts ; being the first grand fastness, the City of David, covered by the oldest wall and defended by the strongest works ; a mass of noble structures, palaces, walls, and towers, conspicuous amongst which stood the great Synagogue, the Roman Prætorium, the house of Caiaphas, the towers of Hippicus, Phasaelus, and Mariamne, and beyond all these adornments and defences rose the brow of Mount Gareb, with its waste of gardens, tenements, and tombs.

“ There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down ! ”

Peter and Andrew, James and John, gathered around JESUS, saying, “ When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign ? ” And JESUS sat with them on the Mount of Olives, discoursing of the fall of Jerusalem, the end of an old world, and the beginning of a new, until the sun went down.

Next day, Wednesday, he remained at Bethany, in seclusion, while Judas was arranging with Annas and the Nobles how he should be seized, so as to avoid creating an uproar among the common people, always the first consideration with the aristocrats and their high priest. On Thursday, JESUS sent Peter and John into Jerusalem, to prepare the Passover, in the guest chamber; and at sunset of that day the Twelve sat down to the Last Supper. Judas left the room to see Annas, and after singing the usual hymn of that feast, the other disciples rose from the table, and passing through the Sheep gate into the Cedron valley, came to the cluster of olive trees which marked the site of Gethsemane, the Old Presses. Here JESUS went apart, and while his disciples slept in the warm spring evening, he watched and prayed, until the betrayer came and delivered him over to his enemies with a kiss.

In the dead watches of the night, the Sanhedrin were called together, not in the Lishcath ha-Gazith on the Temple hill, but in the Sagan's palace, near the great bridge over the Xystus. Those members who came early to the call, found Annas with his prisoner in the audience chamber, trying witness after witness as to his acts and words; but finding nothing to sustain a legal and open charge, such as could be laid before a Roman magistrate. Annas bade him speak for himself, but he answered not a word, until the High Priest said to him—"Art thou the Christ?"

Then the Lord opened his lips, saying:

"I AM."

Then Annas bade him say who were his disciples and what were his doctrines; for the magnificent High Priest, the chief ruler in Zion for twenty years, had paid little attention to what must have seemed to him the youngest and obscurest of the Galilean sects. JESUS replied:

"I spake openly to the world; I taught in the synagogue and in the Temple, whither the Jews resort; in secret have I said nothing. Ask them which heard me. They know what I said."

An officer of the Temple smote him on the face, saying—
“Answerest thou the High Priest so?”

Annas commanded the priestly guard to bind him with cords; and when it was day, being Friday, they went in a body, Annas and the Great Council, to the palace of Caiaphas, nearer to the Prætorium on Mount Zion, the Sanhedrin having a legal right to meet in their President's house. Here the Lord was questioned again, in a formal manner, and answering before Caiaphas that he was the Christ, the official high priest rent his clothes, in sign that these words were blasphemous, and worthy of death by the cruellest punishment—that of the cross. The Sanhedrin pronounced him guilty, and the officers seizing his person, bound him again with cords, and carrying him to the Prætorium gates, delivered him a prisoner into the hands of Pilate's guards.

Unable to pass those gates, since to enter into a Gentile dwelling might have rendered them unclean, the elders waited and clamoured before the court until Pilate awoke and came out to see them. What did they want? They had brought him a prisoner. What was this person? An evil-doer; or they would not have brought him to the Judgment hall. Then why not have tried him by their law? They could not; the case was grave; and they had no power to put a man to death.

Death! That word was a surprise. Pilate might go far to be friends with the high priests and with the people; but offences worthy of death could only be judged by the Roman law.

Going away from the elders, he sent for JESUS into his court, and put the plain question to him—“Art thou the king of the Jews?”

“My kingdom is not of this world,” said the Lord. That answer seemed enough for the Roman soldier. Careless about empires in the clouds, indifferent to crimes of thought, Pilate went out to the elders, saying he could find no fault in this man—no fault against the Roman law. They cried, that he was a leader of sedition; one who had stirred up

tumults in the land from Galilee to Jerusalem. Galilee? Pilate caught at this word; for if JESUS were a native of Galilee, his own prince, Antipas Herod, then staying in Bezetha for the feast, had the right to judge him.

Pleased by this deference of the Roman governor to his wishes, Antipas received the elders and their prisoner in the midst of his guard; listened to the accusation, and then began to question JESUS. But the Lord stood dumb. He had refused to appear in the Golden house; and being brought to the Bezetha palace, bound and by force, he refused to answer one word to the husband of Herodias, to the murderer of John. Vexed, uneasy—for his conscience pricked him, his people murmured, and his very soldiers canvassed his offences—Antipas would do nothing with the Silent Teacher; neither free him from the accusation nor condemn him upon it. He merely sent him back to Pilate, to be dealt with according to the Roman law; a return of courtesy which had the happy effect of making the Jewish prince and the Roman procurator friends.

Unwilling to offend the high priests and Sanhedrin—that is to say, all the chiefs of parties through whom he ruled the people—Pilate went down once more to the palace gate, and sitting in his chair on the Gabbatha, proposed to the Jews that as nothing appeared against JESUS worthy of death, his offences should be treated like other synagogue transgressions; that is to say, that he should be scourged and expelled from the Temple court. The elders would not hear him. One of his wife's pages now came out from the palace, saying that Claudia had been warned by a dream, and that she begged him not to assist in shedding a good man's blood. Then Pilate suggested to the people, that if they considered his crime of treason penal, he, as Cæsar's officer, should pardon and release him, giving his life to them, as their custom was at every celebration of the Passover. Still, they would not hear him: crying about his chair of state—"Release to us Bar-Abbas, release to us Bar-Abbas!" This man had been condemned for murder

and sedition, and was therefore a political criminal—a genuine offender against Cæsar's power.

The Procurator held out long ; his practical Roman genius making him but a mild judge of such treasons as Annas and Caiaphas had found in JESUS. Quick to see the offence of tearing down his brazen shields, of refusing to pay his poll-tax, of hustling and stabbing his guards—he was slow at comprehending such crimes as talking with a Samaritan, doing good deeds on the seventh day, breaking bread with unsprinkled hands, announcing the kingdom of heaven. Again and again he cried—What evil has he done? To which the elders answered with a loud shout—"Away with him ! Crucify him !"

Pilate still doubting what he should do, and being loth to shed blood for an offence which he could not understand, the elders turned upon him also, raising the cry of treason : "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend ! He who makes himself a king speaks against Cæsar !" A dangerous cry ; and one which might imperil both Pilate's fortunes and the public peace. Political considerations weigh heavily with a politician. Pilate had made a friend of Antipas by sending JESUS to Bezetha ; now he had a chance of conciliating the whole Sanhedrin by sending him to Golgotha. So, calling for water, he yielded him to the Jews ; saving himself, as he thought, by saying that he washed his hands of innocent blood ; of innocent blood according to the Roman law.

JESUS was now led away from the palace, by way of David's tower and the Almond pool to Genath, through which gate of Jerusalem the procession of soldiers and people marched into the nest of gardens and tombs below the city wall.

At the cross, dying between two thieves, on a charge of blaspheming God, the human part of His story closed.

What followed is a tale for other pens to tell.

His parting words to His Church—His sudden appearance to the Magdalene and the holy women—His conversation

with the two disciples going into Emmaus—His revelation to the eyes of Peter who took him for a spirit—His coming into the upper room—His promise of a further Gift—His rebuke of Thomas the Twin—his walk by the lake of Galilee, early in the morning—His ascent from Olivet to heaven :—these details of a second portion of the Sacred Story seek no illustration from scenery and books.

They form a divine episode in the history of man, and must be left to the writers who could not err.

CHAPTER LV.

AFTER EVENTS.

MANY of those priests and elders who stood on the city wall overlooking Golgotha until JESUS died, and then hied away home before sundown, so as not to profane the Sabbath day by walking a mile after the shofa sounded, lived through the troubled years which followed that event. Some lived to see the camp fires of Titus, and to perish miserably in the wreck of Jewry and Jerusalem. Annas survived until after the great revolt, and was the victim of an atrocious scene in the civil war.

The chief dates may be given in a few words.

In 29 A.D. (as we reckon the time—an error of four years having crept into the record) JESUS suffered death.

30. Simeon, son of Hillel, died ; and his son Gamaliel, chief of the moderate party among the Pharisees, became Rector of the Great College.

33. Annas, Caiaphas, and their partizans, alarmed by the increasing numbers of the new Church, seized Peter and John, called a meeting of the Sanhedrin, and charged the two apostles with disturbing the public peace. It was the old police affair ; no question of their faith or teaching ; only of their right to teach at all. These Sadducees cast them into the common prison of Jerusalem ; the doors of which were opened by angels in the night. Next day, in the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel spoke in their defence ; advising that they should be left alone, for if their work were of men

it would perish, like that of Judas the Galilean, and if it were of God they would not be lifting up their hands against the Most High.

The new Church went on increasing.

36. Pilate, after ten years of service, was disgraced and called to Rome. One of that cloud of false witnesses which sprang up every year, told the people of Samaria that he knew where the sacred vessels lay hid, and fixed a day when they should meet him in thousands on Gerizim, the Mount of Blessings, to dig them up. Hearing of this movement, Pilate sent troops into the highways and villages round Shechem, and these soldiers, setting upon the people, slew the innocent with the guilty, and put the whole body of Samaritans to flight. A great cry for vengeance arose in Samaria; the Senate sent an embassy to Antioch; and Vitellius, a man of craft and policy, wishing to stand well with the Jews, put the government of Samaria and Judea into fresh hands, and commanded Pilate to report himself in Rome. Here we lose sight of him. Legends make him a suicide; some in a Roman prison, others in Gaul, and others again near the lake of Lucerne, on the summit of the mountain which bears his name.

Vitellius came up from Antioch to Zion, where he calmed many passions, and won over to his person both the people and the priests; the first by taking off the taxes on fruit, the chief article of food; the second by restoring to their custody the sacred robes. He conciliated Annas, just as Cyrenius had won him thirty years earlier, by settling the high priesthood in his house. In virtue of this new settlement, the Sagan's second son Jonathan succeeded his son-in-law Caiaphas, and his third son Theophilus succeeded Jonathan—for a little while.

Fortune began to frown upon Antipas Herod about the same time as she deserted Pilate. During a great battle with Aretas, the father of his divorced and exasperated wife, some of his troops went over to his enemy, and the field was lost. But worse to him than the loss of towns

and hamlets in Perea was the rumour which flew abroad like fire that the hand of God was now turned against him, and that his people had been slain on account of his crimes. The soldiers who betrayed him justified themselves by his offences, and from Judea to Galilee it was repeated in the gateway and the synagogue that Heaven was abandoning the murderer of John. Aretas occupied Damascus, and was the king of that city when Paul set forth on his journey.

38. Antipas, urged by Herodias, sailed for Italy, in the hope of being able to beg Samaria and Judea, and of receiving from Cæsar the rank of king; but Herod Agrippa, brother of Herodias, having poisoned the imperial mind against him, the Tetrarch, instead of gaining a crown by this journey, was accused before the Roman senate, deprived of his province of Galilee, robbed of his money, and banished into Gaul. Herodias, pardoned for her brother Agrippa's sake, refused the offer of a large sum of money, and clinging to the man whom she had ruined, went proudly to his exile in the West.

41. Prince Agrippa was made King of Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and Perea; in fact of all the countries which had owned the sway of Herod the Great. His arrival in Jerusalem was the signal for a change of men; the aristocratic party falling, the popular party rising into power. Theophilus the Sethian was deposed from the High Priesthood, and Simon, the Boëthusian, occupied once more the pontifical throne. The great works of Herod were now resumed with spirit; a third wall being added to the city on its northern side; taking in the new town of Bezetha, with a large part of Gareb, including the place of crucifixion and the site of Joseph's tomb.

But with all his vivacity and splendour, Agrippa could not govern the Temple through the Boëthusians, and after struggling for a few months against the Sadducean nobles, he was compelled to make terms with the aristocrats, put down his aged kinsman Simon, and raise Matthias, a fourth son of Annas, to his place.

44. The popular Agrippa died, and his son, also called Herod Agrippa, being thought too young for such a throne, Caspius Fadus came out from Rome as Procurator. Judea, Samaria, Galilee, became provinces of the empire; the responsibility of naming high priests being left with the Herodian prince.

45. Theudas, one of the many false Christs, led a multitude of men from all parts of Judea into the wilderness, saying he would take them beyond the Jordan into a free country, where they should feel the stranger's yoke no more. Fadus sent out bodies of horse and foot; caught the seceding host, with all their flocks and herds, broke through their ranks, and seizing Theudas in their midst, struck off his head.

46. Tiberius Alexander, an Egyptian Jew, succeeded Fadus as procurator of Roman Judea. More false Christs appeared. As the people grew in turbulence, the Roman rule became more savage; but it was never so ferocious as when administered by this Alexandrian Jew. Every tumult was suppressed in blood; hundreds, nay thousands, were slaughtered in a single day; and the false prophets were either put to the sword or nailed to the cross. Among others who perished under this Jewish Procurator were Simon and James, sons of Judas, the two Galilean chiefs. This sect of Zealots, having strengthened itself in number, not only in Galilee, but in the hamlets of Perea and Judea, even in Zion and Jericho, until it included the most active and daring of the population, fancied itself strong enough to begin the holy war. Simon and James gave the word to rise; but on Tiberius Alexander marching a cohort against the rebels, they broke and fled, leaving their captured prophets to be nailed on a cross.

48. Ventidius Cumanus replaced Tiberius Alexander. The new Procurator put a strong cohort into Antonia, from which a colonnade ran to the Temple. The roof of this colonnade, open to the soldiers, looked down into the Israelites' court, and when the Jews came up to the feast

of unleavened bread, the soldiers mocking and insulting them from the roof, caused a great uproar in the court; the Jews flinging stones, the Romans launching darts; until the riot becoming general, Cumanus sent for fresh troops, and his soldiers, forcing their way into the temple courts, drove out the people in disorder, so that the gates were choked, and ten thousand men were trodden to death.

Quarrels also broke out between the Galileans and Samaritans. A Galilean caravan was coming up to Zion by way of Shefelah, instead of by the Jordan route; at Gemin, a Galilean was murdered by a Samaritan; on which the Galileans, not only from the north, but from Jerusalem also, marched into Samaria, plundering and burning the houses and hamlets in revenge. Cumanus, at the front of his Sebastan cavalry, rode upon these rioting Jews, dispersing the mob, and making prisoners of their chiefs, whom he carried into his camp at Cæsarea. The nobles of Sebaste and Jerusalem appealed against each other to Quadratus, President of Syria, then staying at Tyre. Jonathan, son of Annas, represented the Jews.

50. Gamaliel died. Felix, a slave, and an empress's lover, succeeded Cumanus, and the noble party gained the upper hand in Jerusalem. Jonathan son of Annas became high priest for the second time. The aristocrats, aided to the full extent of Roman power, made war on the reforming Galileans; who, since the massacre of Simon and James, having taken Menahem, a third son of Judas of Gamala, and Eleazar, a son of Simon, for their captains, had become a state within the state, a church within the church, absorbing many of the Essenes, most of the Pharisees, and counting within their pale a majority of the Jews. Moderation died with Gamaliel; the Separatists merged for a time into the warlike sect of the Galileans; and the war between the Sadducees and these Galileans—the Nobles and the People—became a war to the death.

Villages were burnt and razed; hundreds of Galileans were crucified; roads became unsafe; commerce declined;

the old calm of prosperity was at an end. Having the legions at their call, the Sadducees, everywhere masters of the open field, pursued these dreamers of an earthly kingdom as a threatened oligarchy always pursues a crushed but still formidable foe. Every ditch had its cross, and the roads round Jerusalem were black with murder. Excess begot excess. Doras and a band of desperate fanatics, putting short swords under their cloaks, went up into the Temple, through the Israelites' court into the Holy Place, and finding the high priest Jonathan before the altar, rushed upon him, pierced him with their weapons, and left him dead on the ground, as Mattathias had struck down the false priest on Modin. Done in broad day, in the midst of crowds, this murder of Jonathan, son of Annas the Sadducee, was not avenged; for the common people felt with the assassins, and the Zealots declared that this deed was done for the glory of God.

Quick to perceive that the Temple and the Temple courts offered them a field in which they could meet their enemies in open fight, beyond Roman help, the Zealots went up again. No Gentile could enter the sacred courts; and as Felix cared nothing about the Temple feuds, except so far as they might disturb the city, and as he had begun to favour the popular party, if he had not actually incited Doras to commit his crime, he left the Jews very much to themselves; keeping the gates, and confining the riot and bloodshed to the Temple courts. So the Swordsmen (sikars) found an open field in the house of God; and after Jonathan's murder, they picked off several persons daily, glutting their vengeance on every man who had done them wrong.

Of the false Christs who rose in the reign of Felix, the Egyptian prophet made the greatest noise. One of the Messianic prophets had foretold that the Deliverer would come up out of Egypt; a fact which had conduced to the popularity of Simon the high priest, and of Tiberius Alexander, the procurator, both of whom had been Alexandrian Jews. The Egyptian Prophet announced himself as Christ; set up

his camp in the wilderness, among the Essene villages and caves; drew a vast multitude of dupes together; telling them that on a certain day he would lead them to the top of Olivet, whence he should command the walls of Jerusalem to fall down, as the walls of Jericho had crumbled under the trumpet blast, and that he should march his disciples into the Temple through this miraculous breach. Four thousand men came up the wadies to Olivet; but instead of seeing the walls fall down and the legions fly in panic, they saw the Roman shields and helmets moving up the hill-side, solid, terrible in array. Four hundred of the fanatics fell in the first onset; two hundred threw themselves on their knees; the rabble fled into the wilderness; and the Egyptian Prophet disappeared for ever.

60. Portius Festus, the upright judge of Paul, came out as Procurator on the accession of Nero. He essayed to rule through an old and eminent race of high priests, the house of Fabus; procuring the re-elevation of that Ishmael, son of Fabus, who had first succeeded Annas in the reign of Valerius Gratus. But the time for men of easy manners and simple life had long gone by. The Galileans, under the various names of Zealots, Swordsmen, Brigands, were masters of the country, having persuaded the foolish Felix that they, and not the nobles, were the only friends of Rome.

On the other hand, the high priests, of whom there had been ten in thirty years, nearly all of whom were still living, raised companies for their own defence. Every house was becoming a fortress; every servant a soldier. The partizans of Annas set upon those of Ishmael; at first with abuse, then with clubs and stones; and Festus, thinking he had no concern with these pious bickerings, left the rabble to fight it out.

Rapid changes now passed over the nominal priesthood. In a few months Ishmael gave way to Joseph, son of Simon the Boëthusian, and Joseph fell in turn before Ananus, fifth son of the old Sagan, under whom the Noble party regained

its power. But though they won it bravely, they could not keep it long.

61. The Sethian faction being masters in the Sanhedrin, James and other Christians were condemned to death, contrary to the Roman law; on which account Ananus, after a reign of three months, was deposed from the office he had thus abused; being replaced by Jesus, son of Damneus, a man of weaker character and more moderate views; who in turn yielded his seat to Jesus, son of Gamaliel. These three high priests, appointed within a year, took arms against each other; filling the streets of Jerusalem with daily broils, until the wealth, daring, and connections of Ananus carried the day and put the city at his disposal.

62. Albinus arrived in Syria, and his object being to restore peace in Zion, he first made terms with the Noble party in possession, and then arrested ten of the most daring Swordsmen. By these acts of policy and vigour, the Sadducees were won to Rome, and the mutinous spirit of the Jews appeared to be quelled. But the Galilean bands were stunned, not crushed, by these blows, and society was become too corrupt for any sedative action of the public force. Knowing that Ananias son of Nebedeus (Paul's Ananias) was one of those who had prompted the seizure of their chiefs, the Swordsmen went up into the Temple, and carrying off the Temple scribe, a servant of his son Eleazar, the Temple Captain, sent to the High Priest and Temple Captain a message to this effect—that the secretary's life should be spared and his liberty restored on condition that the high priest persuaded Albinus to give up the Swordsmen's chiefs.

The priest went up to Zion with his tale of woe, and the Procurator, yielding to the man's miseries, set the Swordsmen free; an act of weakness which increased the evil it was meant to cure. Feeling their strength, since they had found a way to treat with Temple and Palace as an independent power, the Swordsmen, whenever a man of

their party fell into trouble, had only to seize a son, a nephew, a servant, of one of these priestly nobles, and so ransom him from death.

Some of these daring bands found leaders who were formidable to the high priests in another way ; Saulus and Costobarus, princes of the line of Herod ; who gathered troops of servants into their houses, and set up a kind of royal state, doing their own will in the city and allowing their followers to do theirs also. But in the Temple and the Palace, the Sethians held their own and even increased their power ; Jesus, son of Gamaliel, being now formally deposed in favour of Matthias, son of Theophilus and grandson of Annas ; and in the pontificate of this Matthias the great revolt against Rome took place.

CHAPTER LVI.

REVOLT AND CIVIL WAR.

65. **G**ESSIUS FLORUS came into Judea ; a man unfitted by nature and education to control a society so corrupt as that of the Jews ; being one of the basest of the base, and having in Cleopatra, his wife, a companion as black in heart and hot in blood as he was himself. Neglecting the nobles, despising the people, he, in less than a year of mismanagement, drove moderate men to despair, and Sadducees into revolt.

The first signal of the national war was given by a priest.

66. When Nero sent his usual offering to Moriah, to be laid on the Jewish altar, Eleazar, Captain of the Temple, being opposed in policy to Florus, Matthias, and the Romanizing Jews, persuaded the sacrificing priests to reject the emperor's gift ; on which some of the elders, timid and rich, went up to Nicanor's gate, opening into the Priests' court, and reasoning with the sacrificers, begged them to accept the imperial gift and perform the customary rites. But the people, relishing Eleazar's counsels, rose upon these elders, drove them from the bronze gates with threats and outcries, and the Temple guards and servants, snatching up spear and shield, ran through the courts and alleys of the city, shouting that the hour of revolt had come, and calling on every man to arm. In a few hours the open city was in Eleazar's hands ; the Romans, under Metilius, having

quitted the Temple gates, retiring into Antonia and Zion, fortresses admitting of defence by a smaller body of disciplined men.

Either from the policy which so often puts father and son on opposite sides in a civil strife, or from his having been seized as a hostage by Metilius, Ananias (Paul's Ananias) remained in the Roman camp, while his son Eleazar led the city bands. Each party fought with undaunted heart; the Jews increasing in numbers as the country came in; the cohorts thinning by the daily waste of life. Judea, Galilee, Perea, joined in the insurrection, and night and day the bands came marching up the wadies to assist their brethren and direct the war. In a week, the Romans were driven in upon the Prætorium; many noble houses in Zion were destroyed by fire, including Agrippa's palace near the great bridge, the archives of Judea, and the house of Ananias. Then, the people assaulted Antonia, carried the fortress by storm, and put the whole garrison to the sword. Except Herod's palace on Mount Zion, and the three great towers above it, Eleazar was now lord of every part of Jerusalem. But in the very moment of his conquest, the post of General of the Insurrection was wrested from his grasp by a man of bolder spirit and higher assumption than his own.

This new chief was Menahem, son of Judas of Gamala. Since the crucifixion of Simon and James, Menahem had become the great chief of this turbulent party of Galileans—Swordsmen, Zealots, Brigands, what not—having for his principal captain his nephew Eleazar, son of Simon. In Galilee, Idumea, and Perea, they made themselves masters of all the open country; in the towns they became strong enough to displace many of the old magistrates and generals; and even in the capitals, Tiberias and Jerusalem, they could carry everything before them which depended on audacity and vigour. Joshua, son of Sapphias, one of their party, raised a great insurrection of sailors and shepherds in Galilee; and the time being come when they felt strong enough to march on Jerusalem and give battle to the

Romans, Menahem and Eleazar drew their followers together into the wilderness, on the western shore of the Dead Sea, and seizing by stratagem the great fortress and armoury of Masada, put the Roman garrison to the sword. Arming his camp of shepherds and artizans, Menahem now instituted a body guard, assumed the office of Messiah, surrounded himself with royal state, and marched into the Holy City, where he deposed Eleazar, Captain of the Temple, from his command, giving the chief military power into the hands of Eleazar, his nephew, and pressing the siege of the Romans in Mount Zion with an irresistible ardour and success. The native troops begged quarter and retired. The Romans, too proud to sue, too weak to resist, abandoned their camp, retreating into the three great towers; at the very moment when Menahem was forcing their lines, massacring their stragglers, and burning their magazines.

Ananias (St. Paul's high priest), being found in a sewer of the palace, was put to death.

Then the new Messiah, robing himself as a king, went up to the Temple, attended by his guards, to offer sacrifice to God: but on the Sacred Mount he was encountered by Eleazar, son of the murdered high priest, at the head of his Temple guards. Rushing upon Menahem, the Captain scattered his troops, and drove him out headlong and in disorder from the Temple courts. For some hours Menahem was lost in the vaults and corridors of the Temple, but a swift and stern pursuit discovered him in Ophel, under the Temple wall, when he was put to incredible tortures, and at length was mercifully slain.

Eleazar, Captain of the Temple, now resumed his command, prosecuting the siege of Metilius with as much furious valour as the false Messiah had displayed. Metilius, driven to despair, proposed to surrender the great towers, magazines, armouries, everything in his possession, if the lives of his soldiers should be spared; a base proposal, which Eleazar accepted, making it the basis of a treaty of surrender, which

he signed and violated within an hour. Every man who marched out of David's tower was put to the sword; Metilius alone excepted; for on being offered his choice of death or circumcision, this unspeakably degenerate Roman consented to become a Jew.

The whole country now rose in revolt, and a war of races and of principles began. Every Jew tried to kill a Gentile, and as an act of safety the Gentiles began to massacre the Jews. On the day of Eleazar's treachery in Zion, every Jew in Cæsarea was slaughtered by the Roman troops. Sebaste was carried by assault, Gaza was reduced to ashes. Hippos and Gadara were the scenes of faction fights. Two thousand Jews were murdered in Ptolemais, two thousand five hundred in Askalon. In Tyre and Sidon none were left alive.

Cestius, president of Syria, now brought up the twelfth legion from Antioch to Ptolemais, Cæsarea, and Joppa, the last of which towns he plundered and burnt. Sephoris and Sebaste were soon occupied by the Romans, and a main part of the army, marching under Gallus into the hill country of Judea, encamped on Scopas, from which they entered into the suburb of Bezetha, and menaced Mount Zion itself with assault. The Nobles, welcoming this advance of Cestius, their only protection against the Swordsmen and Zealots, sent Ananus, son of Jonathan (that high priest who had been slain by the Swordsmen) to speak with Cestius from the walls, offering to submit themselves to Rome, and throw open the city gates. Cestius hesitated to believe in these friends of Rome, until the Zealots, discovering this treachery of the Nobles, set upon them, pelting them with stones and driving them to their palaces. An open assault by the legionaries failing, Cestius retired to Scopas, galled in his retreat, and thence fell back to Bethhoron, Lydda, and the sea-coast.

The Zealots were now masters of nearly all Palestine, and the people, many of them insincerely, professed the tenets of these triumphant Galileans. Not to bring ruin on their kin, the high priests and nobles had to humour the fighting

sectaries ; courting their leaders, praising their great deeds, and professing to share their zeal. In part they succeeded in allaying the old suspicions and animosities of the Swordsmen, and when governors and generals came to be appointed by the insurgent people, the Nobles secured a very fair share of power, especially in Jerusalem, where Annas was elected in a joint commission with Joseph, son of Gorion, to the supreme direction of affairs, with the special object of defence. Eleazar, the Temple Captain, a man of great services, but unsafe opinions, they sent as general into Idumea, naming as his coadjutor Joshua, son of Sapphias, the daring rebel, who preferred to remain in Galilee, of which province he made himself a petty king.

Having a vast authority over the boatmen and peasants of the lake country, this Joshua led a great company of Zealots and idol breakers into the neighbourhood of Tiberias, whence he sent a message to the senators of that city demanding that they should deface the Greek sculptures and destroy the shining roof of the Golden house. The senate refused. Joshua marched within a mile of the city and renewed his demands. In the meantime messengers, among them Josephus the historian, had come down from Jerusalem to organize the national war ; and these men of high rank insisted, like the sailors and shepherds, on the sculptures being cleansed from the wall and the golden roof pulled down. The senators of Tiberias, finding that they could not save the palace, even by risking the streets in which it stood, were about to yield the chief ornament of their city to the mob, when Joshua, vexed at the long and tedious parley of these old Pagans, burst into the town, put the Greek inhabitants to the sword, plundered the royal apartments, and set the magnificent pile on fire. The spoil of his bands was vast and precious ; inlaid tables, candlesticks of Corinthian brass, and quantities of silver bars, being found in every room. But when the flames ascended to the rafters, and the thieves expected the golden plates to fall into their laps, they were surprised and maddened to learn that, unlike

the doors and roofs of the Temple, the timbers of the Golden house had been only gilt.

Joshua was not punished for this outrage against the Golden house. Josephus recommended the Sanhedrin to treat him well, lest he should do much worse ; and as they could not punish him for his crimes, they counted his offences to him for virtues, took him into favour, and rewarded him with the great command of Tiberias.

67. Vespasian was appointed President of Syria.

The Christians quitted Jerusalem ; retiring with their pastors to Pella, the Greek city beyond Jordan.

The Romans conquered Galilee and Perea.

Being now the undisputed masters in Jerusalem, the Zealots deposed Matthias the Sethian high priest ; and depriving the princely houses (Seth, Boëthus, Fabus, Damneus, and Nebedeus) of their right to supply candidates for the sacred office, they cast lots for his successor, and the appointment fell on Phannias, a rustic who could scarcely be made to understand what the priesthood meant. Annas, being one of the two official magistrates who had charge of everything in the city, protested against this stretch of lay power, and going with his son Ananus, and Jesus, son of Gamaliel, into the streets, exhorted the poorer Jews to rise up against the Zealots and wrest the Temple from their hands, offering to expend all that remained of his own bodily strength and mental force in this holy labour. While the aged priest was rousing the people to resist these spoilers of noble houses, the Zealots, hearing of all that was being done, rushed forth into the streets, and a fight began. The nobles came out with their sons and servants, and being joined by many of the citizens, they charged the Zealot bands ; first throwing stones and darts at them, and when they saw their opportunity, dashing in upon them with their swords. Slowly, the Zealots fell back towards the Temple gates, through which Annas and his partizans pressed with the retiring foe, until the gates and the outer courts were won. Jerusalem might have been saved, but for a scruple which seized upon the

advancing priest. According to the Law, no man could enter the inner courts until he had undergone purification ; and this aged Sadducee, who rejected the doctrine of an after life as a silly fable, paused at the inner gates, and drew off the victors from their prey, lest the victorious citizens should pollute by their presence the sacred ground ! He set a guard of six thousand men about the cloisters, and sent the rest of his army home ; hoping to persuade the Zealots to surrender and avoid any further desecration of the Temple courts.

This hesitation of the old man cost him his party and his life.

The Zealots had time to send into the country, and especially to Idumæa, saying that Annas meant to sell them to Cæsar, and begging their partizans to march at once on Jerusalem. Before Annas knew that a message had been sent, the Idumæans were at the city gates. A parley from the wall, in which Jesus, son of Gamaliel, urged them to go back, incensed the strangers, who replied that they had come to defend the capital of their nation and the altar of their God from enemies without and factions within. But the gates being closed, and a siege of the city beyond their means, they had to camp out in the open valleys of Hinnom and Jehoshaphat. In a tempest of wind and rain the night came down. Annas, saying that God was defending them by storms, neglected to go his usual round of the walls ; and many of the nobles, deserting their irksome posts, went home to bed ; setting servants and poor citizens to hold their watch. At midnight, in the midst of deafening thunder, the guards being housed or sleeping, the Zealots opened one of the gates, that nearest to the Idumæan camp ; and the strangers, rushing into the city and spearing the sentinels and guards, drove back the citizen troops, giving and taking no quarter, but slaying the aristocrats as they sprang from their beds and sallied into the streets.

Day dawned upon a city of corpses. Eight thousand five hundred dead were carried from the Temple court.

Every noble house was pillaged. Every man caught in a palace perished by the sword.

Annas—the aged priest, the first among the Jewish nobles, the official crucifier of Christ, the chief ruler of Jerusalem for sixty years—was found and murdered ; and his body, reviled and spurned, was cast over the city wall to become the prey of dogs and wolves.

70. Titus captured and destroyed Jerusalem.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

IN time, the remnant which was saved from fire and sword, from slavery and exile, ventured to return from Pella to Jerusalem, and to found among the ruins of an apostate city, the new Church of that Christ whom the Separatist people had put to death.

Gentile and Jew now became one in faith and fellowship; and in a little while Gentile bishops began to reign in Jerusalem over the common Church of Jew and Greek.

Constantine built a church over the Holy Sepulchre, which the Persians destroyed and Heraclius restored. More than once that church has been razed to the ground by Oriental sects; for the Resurrection of Christ is the cardinal fact of Christianity, and the Holy Sepulchre is the visible sign of that great event.

For a thousand years this central evidence of Christian truth has been left in the power of Islam, a second Oriental development of the Jewish church; and by the disciples of this Arabic creed, the Holy Sepulchre has been kept, on the whole, and with rare exceptions, open, free, and safe.

A first day spent in the Rotunda will not edify a pilgrim much; even though he should remember that it stands in an Oriental city, close to the wilderness and the Dead Sea, and subject to the spirit of such a place.

Passing from the open court into the low doorway of the basilica, his instinct of solemnity is shocked by noticing in

a deep recess on the left hand a squad of Turkish light troops ; picturesque, agile fellows, lolling on a mat, throwing off curls of smoke, and listening to tales of love and war. The men are grave and decorous, as Turkish soldiers are everywhere, except on the battle-field ; yet their sabres clank on the stones, their jebilé rises into the fane, and their pistols and yataghans gleam, unbecomingly, in the house of God. But far more painful to the pilgrim's feeling than the presence of these soldiers in a church, is the fact that in three or four days he will become reconciled to it as a minor evil. A little experience of life in the Rotunda, as it may be seen from dawn to sunset, more than at all other times in the holy week, will perhaps suggest to his mind some explanation of this great mystery—

Why has Providence, in its wisdom, taken from our care the custody of our most sacred shrines ?

It is not because we are feeble. It is not because we are poor. It is not because we are distant and lukewarm. The masters of Delhi and Algiers might become the masters of Jerusalem in a single week, if it depended solely on the assertion of physical power. But we are weak in the spiritual charities of brotherhood and forbearance.

Among the crowds who gather in this porch and worship under this dome, there are twenty rivals, and not two brothers. A pilgrim of one country believes the pilgrim from another country to be a heretic and a scoundrel, a deserter from the true church, a denier of the true God. The monk of Mount Gareb scowls on the monk of Mount Zion as on a man who is hurrying to his bed of everlasting fire. What a Catholic peasant of Connemara thinks of a Presbyterian tradesman in Derry is something tolerant and fraternal compared with the bitterness of heart in which a Spanish padre speaks of a Greek, an Armenian pastor of a Copt. With each it is a shrug and a curse. Every friar in Jerusalem imagines that his Christian neighbour is already damned beyond hope of mercy ; being worse, far worse, than a benighted Moslem, an abandoned Jew. A Turk has

no better light ; a Jew has been cursed with a heart of stone ; but what excuse can a Christian pastor imagine for a brother who has had his choice, and has wickedly selected an impure creed ? Why, he asks himself, should the portion of a false Christian be made better on earth than it will be in heaven ? In the world to come the schismatic will have to dwell among the lost : why, then, should he not be hated and reviled, condemned and spurned, by his fellow-men ?

It is in this fierce spirit—a Galilean, not a Christian spirit—that we judge each other at the tomb of Christ. Greek meets Nestorian, Latin encounters Copt, on a spot which each professes to revere, asserting that his brother is not his brother ; that he is a stranger and worse than a stranger ; an intruder into the holy house, whose presence in the shrine is a positive abomination in the sight of God. Hence our only salutation is a scowl of hate, our worship is a scuffle, which requires the presence of negroes and Bashi Bazouks to prevent from degenerating into a daily fight.

Each sect has a right to its turn of service before the shrine ; a service of chants and candles, much clouding of incense, much blazing of flambeaux, much glamour of incantation in ancient and mystic tongues ; making a scene as wild as the bronzed and picturesque men whom it appears to kindle into flame.

The Copts, say, are standing before the shrine : long before they have finished their service of sixty minutes, the Armenians have gathered in numbers round the choir ; not to join in the prayers and genuflexions, but to hum profane airs, to hiss the Coptic priests, to jabber, and jest, and snarl at the morning prayer. The singers repay them in frowns and curses. As the hour draws nigh for these Copts to cease, the men who should be their brethren begin to rear and push : one side trying to remain a second of time beyond their right ; the other side elbowing them away a second before they are bound to retire. To steal one moment from the false church is held to be a victory for the true. Often these priests and worshippers come to blows ; but on

the very first cry of an attack—an affair of candles, crooks, and crucifixes—the Turkish guard is under arms and on the spot ; and unless blood has been drawn, in which case the church is cleared and locked up, the ferocious rivals are allowed to complete their hymns and prayers under the protection of a line of Moslem matchlocks.

Each party in these struggles regards the Turkish soldiers as its allies against the others ; and it may be said in plainest words that among the Greek and Armenian Christians of Judea, many would not scruple to join the Dervishes and Fakeers in cutting every Latin throat in Jerusalem. The grave Arabs look on without a smile ; saying to each other, “Allah is great—How these Nazarenes love each other !”

Sitting under the great dome of the basilica, amidst scenes so wild and strange, it is not without shame that one recalls the beautiful Moslem service in St. Sophia—simple, fervid, pathetic—a service chaste and decorous to eye and ear, as that of an English abbey or cathedral church.

A common feeling for the decencies of public worship—a sovereign power of tolerating rival creeds—are but two out of a hundred points in which there seems to be an approach of character between the Saxon and the Turk ; an approach of character which the keen Asiatics, judging by visible signs, have not failed to seize. In truth, it has become a habit of mind with the Syrians to connect these races of East and West. A Syrian notices that the Turk is never mean ; that he never lies or goes away from his pledge ; that he is personally brave ; that he is haughty yet reserved, masterful yet kind ; that he speaks few words ; that when pressed by danger he will rather fight than parley. And does he not find the same things in a Saxon ? Then, again, he sees that the Englishman and Turk are sworn brothers. Are they not always in the same camp ? Who defends the Caliph against his enemies ? Who drove Napoleon out of Syria ? Who crushed Mohammed Ali ? Who revenged Sinope ? Who fought against the Russians in Kars ? Those

paler and less corpulent Turks who dwell in the far West, and come to Jaffa and Beyrout in ships. And if they have one camp, why not one creed? Many a smart Arab in Palestine believes that we English are Moslems, of a Western sect, as the Persians are Moslems of an Eastern sect; whom pride alone prevents from kneeling in the mosques of a humbler and darker race. A clever bey, who spoke French very well, though he had never been west of Jerusalem, said to me, in substance:—"You English are not Nazarenes. I have watched you very closely, and you have none of the signs by which we know them. If you meet a bishop, you do not dismount from your horse. When you pass a Greek or a Latin priest in the streets you make no sign of the cross. You never kneel before idols. When you pray, you neither screech in the voice, nor foam at the mouth, nor bump your head against the wall. When you walk into the Holy Sepulchre, you do not kiss the great stone at the door; you neither light a candle, nor tear your hair, nor begin to fight. You smile at the singers; you part them when they quarrel; you pity them when they bleed, just like an Arab. When I go up to your grand house on Mount Zion, what do I see? A mosque. You build no minaret; for every Englishman keeps a muezzin in his pocket to tell him the time of prayer; but you have built a mosque. A Nazarene church is painted with pictures, and lighted with candles; a waxen image on this side, a wooden image on that; friars carry dolls and young men tinkle bells. You have no pictures and candles, no images and bells. You have no friars on Mount Zion. Your priest does not shave his head, nor wear a gown. Your house has no cross on the top. Your priest is a mollah, and your people pray like the Moslem." The bey only argued from what he saw; and in likening an Englishman to a Mohammedan he meant to convey the very highest compliment that his idiom could express.

Standing before the shrine, a man cannot help inquiring—How long, how long shall we remain unworthy to possess

our own? For upwards of a thousand years, watch and ward over the Holy Sepulchre have been given to Egyptians, Saracens, and Turks. How long will the Christian nations continue to be unworthy of possessing their sacred shrines? Why has our ark been taken from us? Is the Moslem Turk a nobler guardian of the Tomb of Christ than the Nazarene Greek? The facts reply:

Under Moslem rule, this Church of the Holy Sepulchre is the only Christian edifice in any great capital, to which the multitudinous tribes and peoples of our common faith can freely come, with the right to kneel at its altars, and in whatever tongue and ritual they may use, to offer up praise and thanksgivings to the Father who is in heaven. Would it be free to all, if it were governed by any one Christian sect? Would the Russ divide his privilege of grace with a Frank? Would the Greek permit the Copt to kneel at his holy shrine? Would the Chaldean tolerate the presence of either an English Quaker or an American Evangelical near the Tomb? No one believes it; no one imagines it.

Except among the Turks, there is no true toleration in the East; neither among the Arabs, nor the Greeks, nor the Jews; nothing but a deceptive truce in the midst of a cruel war. The Turk is tolerant, and he is consequently supreme; a necessity, like the Saxon in Calcutta, the Gaul in Algiers, to all these inferior and more fanatical races of men.

To the Moslem rule in Palestine, it is due that we have still a Christian Church, as distinguished from the many churches of Christian sects; a visible type, perhaps a living centre, of that Christianity of the future in which a thousand peoples and congregations may be absorbed into the universal Church of God.

Look at the great dome. It springs over the Sepulchre, the Holy of Holies, the very Shrine of Shrines. If there is one piece of man's work on earth that should be strong and perfect, built of marble and gold, and of all that is costly and durable, surely it is yon vault over the Tomb. Yet the dome of the Sepulchre is a wreck. The plaster is falling from the wall;

the metal has been stolen from the roof ; the paint is either washed away by the rain or scorched away by the sun ; and the showers of winter come rattling through the rents. Any day, any hour, this magnificent Tomb may be destroyed by its crumbling canopy of stone and lead. And this danger to the basilica threatens, this scandal to religion lasts, not because the Christians are either few or poor, but because they cannot agree among themselves ; because they are wanting in charity for each other. The vices of jealousy and hatred which we see in the rotunda, among friars and priests, have their springs in the cabinets of Europe, among statesmen and princes. Greek and Latin, each prides himself on being the elect, and treats his rival as the damned. The Russ will not share his part of the Sepulchre with a Frank, nor will the Frank divide his altar with a Russ. Every church would be master ; each king would be lord of the keys ; each priest would be the dispenser of favours on earth and in heaven.

So long perhaps as we Christians have so little of Christianity as to forget that we are brothers, the guardianship of the Holy Sepulchre will be left with the more liberal and impartial Turk.

CHAPTER LVIII.

JEWS.

IN one of our rides from Olivet to Bethlehem, we find the Tomb of Rachel open ; a mob of men, women, little ones, squatting on the stones ; some droning prayers from printed scraps of paper ; some beating their temples against the pillars ; all crying piteously to the dead mother of Joseph and Benjamin for help.

The pillar which Jacob is said to have set up over the ashes of his beloved wife, is built of loose stones, bound together by cement ; low in height ; in form a rude altar ; the surface being smoothed and whitened, and the fair page scrawled over with Hebrew names and ejaculations. A square room, covered by a Saracenic dome, protects this grave ; in the eyes of Jew, Christian, and Mohammedan alike, one of the holiest spots of the earth. The outer chamber, serving for a door of entry, has been added by some native sheikh.

Once a year, the Rabbi comes from Jerusalem with a procession of men and women, to throw himself at Rachel's feet, recite a long form of prayer, and wail over the departed glories of his race. This passionate grief has spent itself for eighteen hundred years ; yet the men seem choking with agony, and the women and children sobbing as though their hearts would break.

At Hebron, Zion, Safed, every place in which a Jew is found (not the trading Jew, who comes to Jaffa and Beyrout,

buying and selling, and making money, as he would otherwise have gone to Glasgow, Fez, and San Francisco ; but the Jew of Restoration theories, a man who has been drawn from his home in Houndsditch, the Marais, the Ghetto, the Juden Gasse, and sent back to Palestine by Christian help) —this peculiarity is to be noted about him—that he is always wailing and at prayer ; never cheery and at work. A Syrian Jew at work ! the very words seem to spurn each other.

Taking into account the Ashkenazim, the newest comers into the land, there are said to be six or seven thousand Jews in Palestine, more or less restored, which means, in honest English, more or less dependent for their bread on alms. Oldest of these swarms on Zion is the colony of Sephardim ; men who claim to have been driven out of Spain by Isabella the Catholic, and to have found a home, denied to them by a Christian queen, under the benignant sceptre of a Moslem prince.

We Christians cannot pride ourselves on having been either very wise or very logical in our treatment of the holy race.

In the middle ages we shut them up in ghettos ; we declared them infamous ; we banished them, robbed them, roasted them alive ; treated them as vermin, not as human beings. And why ? Because in another age and country, an aristocratic and unpopular high priest, whom the people afterwards rose upon and murdered, had, from political motives, crucified our Lord ? Far, very far, was that from being the cause. No passion will burn for a thousand years. The English who drove out the Jews under Edward, the Spaniards who banished them under Isabella, were thinking less perhaps of Annas than of Maimonides ; less of the unforgotten Jewish crime than of the unsocial Jewish code. A Jew's hand was supposed to be against every man's, and by the rule of moral dynamics every man's hand was turned against him.

All that the Oral Law had made the Galileans, it made their children under the Dispersion. Every Roman writer,

every Christian father, who refers to the Jews of his day, uses the language of denunciation ; treating these exiles as a people of few talents and no virtues ; gloomy, fierce, intractable ; whose bravery in war was but a savage glee ; in a word, as enemies of the whole human race. Tacitus, Juvenal, Suetonius, felt no anger against them on account of Christ ; yet these Pagan writers described them in the blackest tints. Lust of gain might tempt a Jew to sell corn and oil, to lend money on usury to a Roman ; but not even lust of pelf could induce him to eat at a Roman table, sleep under a Greek roof, help a Gaul in his distress, or marry into an Iberian's house. All Gentiles were to him hateful and abominable. Nothing could persuade a Jewish beggar that a European prince was his equal ; and pedlars who could not recite their own shema, prided themselves on their superiority to masters of Hellenic eloquence and art. This pride was carried so far, and shown so offensively, that eminent rabbins, even so late as the reign of Saladin, taught in the public schools of Spain and Egypt, that a Jew was so fenced about with holiness, he could not travel in the same caravan with a Frank for fear of pollution.

Thus, the Jews, by their own acts and teachings, cut themselves off from fellowship with their kind ; and hating the whole world, the world repaid them with scorn and wrong, confining them in ghettos, borrowing their money, putting them to the question, roasting them alive.

But the Western Franks, after taking a few centuries to think of it, have, of their own will, repealed these old and barbarous laws ; allowing the Jew to come back into our midst ; a free man, a citizen of London, Paris, New York ; equal before the law, eligible for office ; opposing our light and liberty to his darkness and superstition ; convinced that in the long day of strife the noblest weapons will always win the fight. This confidence in light, justice, and fraternity, is the philosophy that JESUS taught. It came to us from a Jewish source, and in the fulness of time it is returning to the Jews from whom we learnt it. We begin

to perceive that when a Jew has become a good Englishman, he has made a considerable progress towards the religion of Christ.

Some among us would go farther and faster. Action and reaction are equal ; and as we went very far astray in persecution, it is likely that we shall go far astray in patronage. Taking up the work of Providence, a number of zealous men and women have begun the mighty labour of transferring Houndsditch and the Marais to Zion. Does that duty lie upon us ?

Is it certain that a bodily return of the Jews to Palestine is a Christian idea ? Is it not rather certain that the physical kingdom is a Pharisaical notion, foreign to Christ ? Surely, if the Jews are to be restored to Jerusalem at all, they are to be restored in the spirit, not in the flesh, by reconciliation to His people and communion with His Church. Our Lord founded his Church in Jerusalem, and by divine appointment that Church has never yet sunk into the home of a mere sect. It is the one true Church of Frank and Greek, of Copt and Armenian, of Chaldee and Maronite ; its doors open to all ; its services free to all ; and a reconciliation with this Church, by the ways of culture, purity, and social progress, offers, as some think, the only restoration possible to the Jews.

In order to effect such a return, it is not necessary for Houndsditch to be driven across the seas and up the hills into Judea. The Church of Jerusalem is about us everywhere ; for it is built in the heart of every man who has learned the great law of loving his neighbour as himself.

There are said to be seven millions of Jews alive ; of whom less than seven thousand have been landed in Acre and Jaffa ; poured into a land without roads, capital, commerce, agriculture, peace. Who shall say at how much cost ?

In the convent of Mar Elias I was told a story of one attempt to place this restoration movement on a rational—that is to say, an economical and practicable—basis. This

tale, told me by a man who was perhaps wanting in reverence, since he had lived in Judea for twenty years, and had learned to regard men and affairs in that country from a humorous rather than a sentimental side, may be read, if the reader pleases, as an Apologue :

A man of science, living in New York, is said to have amused his leisure by writing down a list of the sums which had been spent in restoring about six thousand Jews to the Holy Land ; showing the cost per head in hundreds of pounds sterling. He is said to have shrunk appalled from the line of figures when his zeal induced him to multiply the remaining seven millions (speaking roughly) by that average cost. England is known to have spent much money on war ; but her mighty mound of debt is a molehill beside the magnitude of that restoration fund. A doubt having seized this man of science, it was whispered from lip to lip, until the broad question got under weigh, as to whether the societies of London and New York, aided by branch societies in Stoke Pogis and Pough Keepsie, would suffice to equip and transport the tribes, unless the six thousand Jews already sent home, and the fresh arrivals in due course, should begin to earn their bread ? All the actuaries said—No. What then was to be done ? Consult some of the best Jews of Jerusalem ? Well, the Sephardim were consulted on the policy of asking the restored community to labour. Few men have any difficulty in seeing another man's duty ; but the Sephardim could not easily see their way in that direction of getting the Jews to work. In their European homes, these Jews had been merchants ; selling pencils, sponges, old clothes ; but where in Zion and Hebron were the openings for such sales ? As the Greek never writes, there is no call for pencils ; as the Hebrew never washes, there is no demand for sponges ; as the Arab wears no garments, save the rag in which he is born and buried, there is no supply of old clothes. But even if such trades were brisk, six thousand Jews could barely expect to thrive on the wants of four or five thousand Arabs and

Greeks. So, when sponges, rhubarb, toys, old clothes, and toothpicks had been weighed and set aside, some one took the liberty of suggesting land. There is always the land. Grain still waves in Sharon, olives and vines still bloom in Judea. Hinnom was once a garden, and the great plain of Rephaim grew barley enough to tempt the Philistines from the sea. But the Jews, it is said, felt safe against all these snares of science; for a Jew is an alien, and no alien in Syria is allowed to buy land. Yet, as men will go a long way for their theories, the reformers went to Stamboul, where by patience and piastres they succeeded in persuading the Caliph to grant them a special firman, enabling them to buy and to hold land in Judah. The battle was won, said the men of science. Having bought a noble piece of the soil from an Arab aga, they proposed that certain families of Jews should be chosen, as a privilege, to plant and tend it; being paid for their toil in wages and in kind; and after a few years of culture and success, receiving as a gift the land which they should have then made fruitful by their tilth and care. The families were chosen, the tracts laid out, the olive trees bought. But the labourer slackened in his zeal; mid-day found him dozing in the shade; and in the morning he was absent from his patch. The planting was never finished and the crop never garnered. After three months of trial the experiment came to an end.

High words being spoken in the West, excuse was made for the poor Jews that the men had been badly chosen; the selected olive dressers-being taken from the refuse of St. Mary Axe, men who had never before handled a rake, and who could not tell the good soil from the bad. Very well, said London and New York; try again, with these better lights. Among the poor Ashkenazim, being Polish and German peasants, there must be many who have been used to dig and delve, and to whom the culture of an olive garden near Jerusalem will not be a heavier toil than cutting fir trees in frost and snow. Yet the results were very much the same. Like his London brother, the Pole escaped from

his labour in the field, and could not be persuaded to return. In vain it was pointed out to him, that by steady labour he might make himself a man ; that after ten or twelve years of earnest thrift he would be able to sit under his own vine and fig tree. He would not work.

Then the men of science, knowing that individuals and societies are governed by the same natural laws, insisted on inquiries being made as to why a knot of poor Jews, living on alms in the back slums and filthy alleys of Jerusalem, should have one and all declined to become cultivators of olive fields and vineyards, with a sure prospect of becoming in good time owners and occupiers of their fields ? An answer was ready. The beneficence of London and New York, it was said, already sufficed for their simple wants ; the rabbins who dispensed this beneficence to their flocks had no wish to see them withdrawn from the city ; and in short the experiment failed because a committee of men of science presumed to direct and control Jehovah's plans.

And in making this answer (in other words, and with much courtesy of phrase) the Jews felt that their position was strong. They were not arguing with the world ; only with those who considered it a duty to persuade the sponge-seller and old clothesman to go and live in Zion, not because he liked it, but because he would be paid for doing so. To those who would play Providence over him, had not the Jew a right to say : The return of Israel to the Holy Land is not a work to be conceived by a committee, conducted on commercial principles, and made to pay ten per cent. ? It is to be a miracle ; a crowning act of love. As the Dispersion was, so will the Restoration be.

London and New York were made to feel that their part of the plan for restoring Israel was to collect piastres and hold their peace.

Then, the land which in a few years would have belonged to the Ashkenazim, passed over into the hands of the more worldly and industrious Greeks ; men who, long in foresight, knowing the landlords' power, and looking to the

future of their Church, buy up every rood of ground that finds its way into the market. Sales of land are rare. A Moslem aga has an English squire's humour for the possession of much dirt, and the State policy discourages any transfer of the soil into alien hands. Yet the shrewd, insinuating Greek is slowly gaining for himself the few corn-fields, the best olive-groves in Judah; and among the great barons of Palestine must be reckoned the Priors of St. Constantine, Mar Saba, and the Holy Cross.

CHAPTER LIX.

SYRIAN CONVENTS.

A SYRIAN convent may belong to any one of the grand divisions of the Christian Church; for Greek and Latin, Copt and Armenian, Melchite and Maronite, have each and all availed themselves of Moslem toleration to set up their own chapels and religious houses. People who in their own countries are weak enough to refuse a Jew permission to build a synagogue, a Mohammedan to erect a mosque, are not ashamed to enjoy under the Sultan's rule the most perfect liberty of worship. Even Spain, which repels the Hebrew and the Moor from its soil, and refuses the Anglican and the Greek the comfort of having a church in Madrid, may in Palestine construct its convents and altars in ostentatious rivalry to the native mosque. We Franks have much charity to learn from these Orientals.

But, of all the Christian churches in Palestine, the Greek Church alone appears to see how its religious houses can be turned to any practical account in mastering the country and its people.

The Greek convents had a different origin to the Frank. From Alexander's days the Greeks have been in Syria; for a long time they were its rulers, and they have always been either its secular or its religious guides. They built the first Gentile churches, and they inherited the Essenic settlements in the Dead Sea wastes. They were, in fact, the original Christians of this land, and the convents which

they built in Judah were their natural homes. A Latin convent, on the contrary, was by its very nature a strangers' house ; serving, in the first place, as a hotel, in the second place as a fortress, in the third place as a prison. When a stream of pilgrims from London and Paris, Rome and Vienna, began to flow into the Sharon ports, bringing a crowd of men who were nice in their habits, rich in their attire, to whom a lodging such as that under the tree at Kuryet el Enab or by the tank at Jericho, was odious, a demand for bed and supper, for cells and stables, caused the Latin hospice to start up. A traveller in a land like Palestine is content with little : a high wall, a strong gate, a cool chamber, a well, and a cook. To these things add a long table, plenty of spare cells, with just as many friars as may suffice to serve the guests, and your establishment is complete. The Latin convent is in theory an asylum, not an inn. No bill is made out and signed ; for you are supposed to be a pious pilgrim, making a holy tour, and carrying no purse and scrip. No ; there is no charge. Your highness may drop a dole into the common box, if your highness pleases. Of course you will please. Gold will not offend the brethren. You must not fancy you are paying a bill ; but giving to the poor and lending to the Lord. Charity knows no tariff ; on Carmel you may pay twenty piastres for a cup of coffee, at Nazareth ten piastres for a glass of lemon-water. A month at Mar Elias will waste your means like a month at Brighton ; and a sojourn with the Armenian fathers on Mount Zion is no less costly than a residence at Long's.

Yet none of these Latin convents pay their cost. They are never full of guests, and for months together they may not behold a stranger's face. Ramleh and Nazareth are the busiest ; but they do not pay their expenses. Carmel is conducted at a serious loss. If the Greeks do better than the Franks, it is because the inmates of their convents are colonists ; because they know the country, and practise the arts by which laymen thrive.

A convent may be one thing or another. It may stand in the mountains like Carmel, or nestle in a hollow like the Holy Cross ; it may camp out in the wilderness like Mar Saba, or dominate a caravan road like Ramleh. It may be of any age and style; for in the Russian convent of New Jerusalem the mortar is not yet dry, and the legends of the Maronite edifice on Mount Sinai go back for a thousand years. Yet the main distinctions among these religious houses are the uses to which they are severally put by Frank and Greek.

The Latin convents, however much they may differ as to site, service, and government, have certain negative properties in common which they never shed. A Latin convent in the Holy Land is not a nursery of learning, not a hospital for the sick, not a missionary station, not a school of agriculture, art, and trade. The fathers seek no duties among the people in whose towns and villages they dwell. To count their beads, to repeat their offices, to sing lauds and complines, and, like St. John of the Cross, their mystic model, to dream away the day and night, is their rule of life. Their deeds are not for men, and they must hope to be saved by grace and not by works. They neither feed the hungry, nor clothe the naked. Not one man in a hundred among them ever sets himself to learn the native tongue. They take no measures for the rescue of Paynim souls. Hating the country, despising the peasants, they regard their convent as a prison and their residence as an exile. As a rule, they have not come into Palestine of their own desire, nor do they live here now with their free consent. Of course, it would be unfair to cast a reproach on all; among hundreds of holy men, many must be truly devout and honest, worthy to be called the brethren of St. Francis and St. Theresa; still, the great monastic bodies of Syria regard their residence in the land as banishment from a more joyous home in Italy or Spain.

The truth must be told :—a convent in Syria has been found a convenient jail. Having no Australia, no Cayenne,

of her own, the Latin Church is said to have made a handy sort of penal colony in the Holy Land, for such priests and friars as are either too good or too bad for Europe to endure. A monk who has scandalized Madrid, a brother whom Naples cannot forgive, may be sent away by ecclesiastical orders, without incurring noisy protest and public scandal, for a dozen, or twenty years ; in the firm hope, not often thwarted, that the unruly fellow may find peace from either fever, dysentery, or an Arab lance. It may be doubted whether this penal discipline is a good thing for the Latin Church in Palestine. Bating the want of freedom to go astray, the life led by these exiles is not a very hard one. A monk of Carmel never goes among the poor, a brother of Gareb has no charge of souls. His chief duties are to dangle after pilgrims, to chatter about the news, to show the lions of his abode, and to wait with a dumb and eloquent hunger for his vails. Beyond these troubles, he has only to recite a daily prayer, to lock his doors against the Ishmaelite, and to keep his shaven crown from the noontide sun. He may indulge himself with many carnal comforts. Wine is cheap. Fruits are abundant. Tobacco is not forbidden. In some religious houses they keep private stills and make tolerable cordials. A Greek is far less lax in his discipline than a Frank, yet even in the Essene settlement of Mar Saba, where Demetrius denies you goat's flesh and mutton in favour of roots and wild honey, you will be proffered the consolation of raki. The Latins eat flesh, which they know how to stew in oil.

In this world of tears, every man has some drawback to his happiness ; but grant the Latin monk a good conscience, a skilful cook, a flask of sweet Cyprus wine at table, with an afternoon pipe on the convent roof, and he may learn in time to endure the privations of a convent life.

How far the Latin Church may gain or lose credit by having such men to represent her in the Holy Land is another thing.

The course pursued by the Greek communities is wiser.

The Greek father makes himself at home in his convent and in the country. He lives there, he means to die there. If the language is not native to him, he learns to speak it. If the Arabs are unfriendly to him he tries to win them over by service. He trains himself to mix potions, to dress wounds, to choose seed and grain, to graft trees, and to preserve dates and olives. Having to dwell among a Moslem people, he feels that it will not do to treat them altogether like dogs. In a thousand ways he learns how he can befriend them and gain credit with them; while carefully eschewing such controversies as might offend their pride of faith. He employs their labour when they are idle; he advances them money (on interest—as is right); he gives them bandages and physic when they are sick; until the poor Arabs, though they may hear their benefactor called a *giaour*, admit in their hearts that the Greek father is a very good man. A convent like Mar Saba, instead of being a barren refuge and lodging-house like Carmel and Ramleh, is a centre of ideas, charities, and improvements for the whole country side. The peasants look up to it; the wandering Bedaween respect it. Every nook of the wilderness in which a plant will bloom, is the richer and greener for Mar Saba. Of course, in the present Arab temper, there can be no direct religious teaching; nor is such labour of the tongue either needful or desirable just now. Christianity is a life to be lived, not a word to be professed. The best of all sermons is a noble deed, and in worthy doing, the circumstances under which the Greek of Palestine lives enables him to appear to some advantage when compared against a Frank.

The chief thought of a Latin monk is how he can guard his chest and larder, his robe and lamp. To this great end of self-defence, his wall is built high and thick, his doorway is made small and strong. A convent being wholly unarmed in the midst of warlike, predatory tribes, every man of whom owns a firelock, bolts and chains have to do duty for sword and lance. The door is plated with iron. A tower over-

looks the entrance, and when a man is to be admitted within the gates, as many precautions are used as would be taken in a city under siege. A lamp is kept burning through the night, and a watch is maintained by the monks in turn.

In spite of much care, the convents of Palestine are sometimes forced and robbed ; but this is a case extremely rare, even with the Greek convents, which are known to be rich in silver and gold, and which have no Zouaves and fire-ships to avenge their wrongs. In truth, a monk of Mar Saba, of Mar Elias, of the Holy Cross, has come to be regarded as one of the Arab's best friends.

Should a Frank regret and oppose this mastery of the Greek church in Syria? I cannot think it would be wise to do so. The old fear of our finding a Muscovite in every Greek is at an end ; and in Palestine the Czar has no hotter adversaries than those dwelling in the Greek religious houses. Have we not judged our brethren a little too much in the spirit of sect? Of course, a Greek of the Levant is somewhat undertaught ; but he is apt and shrewd ; and in Palestine, at least, he seems to be laying the foundation of his empire in the only way in which a solid foundation can be laid—by gaining a property in the soil, and an influence over the native tribes. Our brother may have many faults ; he may believe in the holy fire, and in numberless legends of the saints ; he may wear a different garb, and follow another rubric ; yet he is still our brother. Why should we resist his progress? He is an Oriental, addressing himself to Orientals. And is not every patch of earth that he reclaims, every Arab whom he wins, every olive that he plants, a gain for that Church which represents peace on earth and good-will to men?

CHAPTER LX.

LYDDA.

ON our way down from the hill country into the plain, by the way of Beth-horon (Saïd with the baggage in advance ; Ishmael, of many piastres, a youth who will one day be a banker and perhaps a pasha, at his side ; Yakoub slightly in the rear), a single horseman dashes past us ; a man with long boots, a tall hat, a furred cloak, a yellow face ; not an Oriental, it would seem, and certainly not a pure Frank. In the stony desert of Beit Ur we overtake, salute, and pass him. He is badly mounted and a vicious rider. Left behind on the road, he is soon forgotten ; the more so that a long ride and a fiery sun have made us sick for food, and strain after shade and water ; but so soon as the mat is spread by Yakoub, the bunch of sticks fired by Ishmael, the bread and chickens unpacked by Saïd, the stranger trots up, throws himself from his horse, draws near to the carpet, and whispers to Yakoub that he hopes to be invited to share our meal.

Now, welcome to strangers is a habit of the country older than its recorded annals ; a habit which has known no interruption save during that reign of the Oral Law when everything went wrong ; for among an Arab people the act of breaking bread with a stranger is not only an act of charity, but a bond of peace. Bread is life. Before eating with a man, you are an alien, maybe an enemy ; after eating, you are a friend, a brother, a guest. To beg for

bread is therefore, in a certain sense, to ask for peace. If you should be engaged in a sacred office—visiting the sick, praying for the dead, preaching to the poor—you may fairly claim food and drink at the nearest house or tent. There is no discredit in being hungry and fatigued ; and no hajjee, whether Moslem or Christian, is ashamed to beg meat and shade. Yet a Saxon and a Gaul never do so ; and the intruder upon our meal soon shows that he is a Muscovite and a Greek. No Frank would have the boldness to attempt what he has done.

He was a farmer in the Ukraine ; a breeder of horses and kine ; busy with his labours, when the thought came upon him that he should recite a prayer over the Virgin's fountain and the Saviour's tomb. With a few copecs in his belt and a sack of meal on his pony, he rode to Odessa, where he sold his beast and bought a passage to Beyrout. From the Lebanon to Nazareth, from Nazareth to Jerusalem, he trudged on foot ; now joining caravans, now going on alone ; always cheery and hungry ; one night sleeping under an olive, the next night in a convent ; never too proud to beg, or to help himself freely from the roadside grapes and figs. He made his journey and relieved his soul. When about to return, a Greek pope lent him the poor mare, which he is to leave with the Russian consul in Jaffa, from whom he expects to get a deck passage in some Russian boat going home to the Black Sea. No one thinks his proceeding odd—for every year a thousand pilgrims arrive in Jerusalem without a piastre in their pockets and with scarce a rag upon their backs.

In judging our brethren of the East, it is well to remember that they all have more or less of this childlike faith.

Lydda, the bright little town of many names—the Hebrew Lod, the Greek Lydda, the Roman Diospolis, the Frank St. George, the Arab Lud—is a place of ten or twelve good houses, and a hundred poor huts, with the ruins of a fine English church, standing in the midst of Sharon ; a town

of figs and mulberries, with date-trees growing in the streets, and olives and oranges hanging over every wall. The whole countryside may be described as an orchard. Arabs call the plain round Lydda the garden of Palestine, and to distinguish it from the rest of this green district it is known as the Field of Sharon. Water abounds, and the warmth is tropical. The loam is dark and ruddy, free from the sterile sands of the sea, and the not less sterile limestone of the hills. A hardy and industrious Moslem people till the soil and gather in the crops of grain. Few scenes in Palestine have a more perfect Arab character than the gate of Lydda, with its palms and pomegranates, its string of passing camels, its knot of effendis smoking, and its group of girls gossiping at the well.

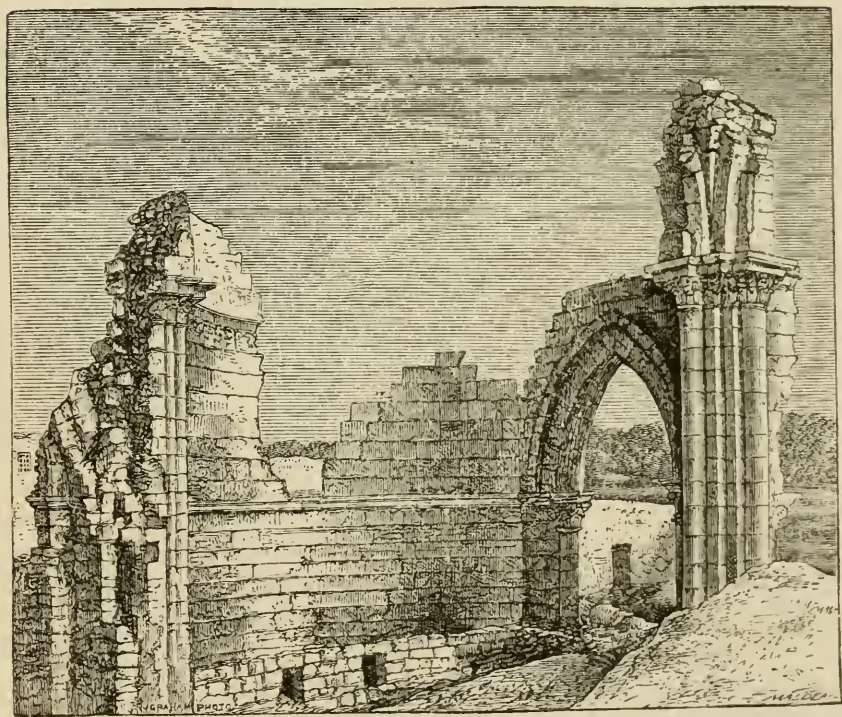
Yet the story of Lydda is not less typical than the names. It was built by the three sons of Elpaal ; reoccupied after the Exile ; separated from Samaria under Jonathan Macabæus ; annexed to Judah as part of the Temple property ; taken by the Romans ; ravaged by Cassius ; restored by Anthony ; visited by St. Peter, who founded a church within its walls ; burned to the ground by Cestius Gallus ; colonized by Vespasian ; made the seat of a Jewish college, of a Roman court, and of a Christian bishop ; rebuilt by Hadrian as Diospolis, city of Jove ; honoured by the birth and burial of St. George ; adorned by Justinian ; disturbed by the heresy of Pelagius ; captured by the Saracens ; retaken by the Crusaders ; destroyed by Saladin ; garrisoned by Lion Heart. Perhaps the most singular event in its strange history was its division by Richard and Saladin into two parts, a Christian side and a Moslem side, in which it was agreed that under the protection of St. George, a martial and heroic saint, worthy to be the patron of gallant men, the English knight and his Saracenic foe, a foe no longer, should dwell in peace and charity with each other, the Frank being free to kneel in his church, the Arab in his mosque.

Other times brought other men ; knights less magnani-

mous than Richard, Sultans less wise than Saladin ; yet the lessons of this gracious treaty were not wholly lost. England adopted St. George of Lydda as her patron ; and the Saracens not only continued to respect the Frankish Church, but added to their own calendar the name of our English saint. For many years after the last Crusader had retired from Lydda, the Christian church was kept in repair by English funds, and when these moneys ceased to flow into Palestine, the beautiful remains were protected against waste and theft by the erection in one corner of a tiny mosque : a plan which the Latins have wisely imitated from the Saracens, and applied to the Pantheon, the Colosseum, and other imperial edifices in Rome.

In spite of its Arab charms, Lydda will always present itself to the imagination as an English place. Under these palms and myrtles, St. George, the lord of chivalry and courtesy, was born ; and under this sacred pile, preserved for us by Moslem care, his ashes are said to lie. And how have we treated our warlike saint ? In a way to make a Mohammedan flush with ire. It is doubtful, perhaps, whether any poor saint in the calendar has either achieved a higher glory, or suffered a deeper wrong, than George. For six hundred years we have borne his banner of the red cross into every corner of the globe ; we have placed his badge on the noblest breasts ; we have kept his day as our special feast ; we have given his name to the most regal chapel in our land ; we have dedicated to him a hundred churches ; and while we have been doing all these things in his honour, we have been indolently content to allow our greatest historical writer to describe him as one of the lowest scamps and darkest villains who ever stained this earth with crime. The St. George of our common books was a low fellow : born in a shop, in an obscure provincial town ; who rose from a servile condition by the arts of a parasite ; who sold swine-flesh to the army and made money by frauds on the treasury ; who fled away from justice, joining the sect of Arians in Egypt, and becoming

archbishop of Alexandria ; who cast into prison all men differing from himself in belief ; who robbed the merchants, played the part of informer and spy, and was at length most justly murdered by his own people, exposed in the public streets of Alexandria, and cast like a dead cur into the sea. But the true St. George of the calendar, the true St. George of England, was another man. Our George was a Syrian saint, as Mohammedan story, not less than Christian story, tells. We had two Georges in history, and, to our shame, we have made them one



ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH AT LYDDA.

Above the grave of St. George of Lydda, a church was built in very early times, some say so early as by Justinian : a convent grew up beside it ; and for many ages the town itself was known to crusading knights by no other name than that of St. George. In the first retreat of Saladin

before the Lion Heart, the wall and church of Lydda were destroyed. Richard spent much time in the place, in the neighbouring Ramleh, and in the meadows and orchards between these towns. Tradition asserts that he rebuilt the church of St. George in Lydda; a legend which is likely enough to be true, and is sustained by the beautiful ruins now standing near the mosque. Yon arch might belong to a part of either Furness or Glastonbury.

St. George having become a Moslem as well as a Christian saint, Lydda has taken a conspicuous place in the Arabic traditions. These agas and effendis, smoking and chatting by the gate, may never have heard of Saladin's treaty, and of the toleration in which Saracen and Latin once lived together in the town of oranges and pomegranates; but they know that St. George is a martial saint, and they believe that the fiercest battle of the latter times will be fought on this very spot. Al Dajjâl, the one-eyed Cafir, the Anti-Christ, whom the Jews are said to call Messiah ben David, is then—according to these Moslem traditions—to arise on the frontiers of Syria, to lay waste kingdoms, and to assume the dominion of land and sea. The whole earth will be afraid of him. He is to ride upon an ass, to be followed by the Persian Jews, and to bear the brand of Cafir on his brow. Then a stir will be heard about the white tower near Damascus; Jesus Christ will descend from heaven upon that spot; and, gathering his people into one camp, He will drive Al Dajjâl before Him, across the Hauran, across the Jordan, through Galilee and Samaria into the Plain of Sharon, and finally engaging him in the gateway of Lydda, He will transfix the monster with a lance. Jesus, say these legends, will then march up to Jerusalem, arriving at sunrise, at the hour of morning prayer, when the Imaum will give way before him, and Jesus will put up the early prayer. Setting up his throne in Zion, He will prepare the kingdom of God by causing justice to be observed and truth to be taught; so that all men shall be happy and the whole earth at peace.

So far the spirit of these legends may perhaps be traced to the bright little episode of Saladin's treaty—to the charities of a time when the Moslem and Christian knights, laying aside their lances and morions, dwelt together in Lydda. Then comes the spirit of a later day, of a new estrangement; and the legends go off into fables about Jesus becoming a Mohammedan, marrying a wife, and tearing down the Cross.

Yet even in their corrupted state, these legends of Lydda suggest how much truth and beauty may come of a little toleration. And if one touch of charity can make the Frank and Arab somewhat of kin, who shall limit the power of a whole scripture of love?

If we could only rise above the spirit of sect, of service, and of form! Are ceremonies vital? He who died in the flesh, that men might live in the spirit, appeared as though He set no store on names and forms; for He founded no system, He published no laws. The religion which He gave to his people was a holy life. Fear God; love one another; such were his rules. In his system, fear of God is not a slave's dread of his lord, still less a Persian's dread of Ahriman, but a wholesome objection to living otherwise than in accordance with the divine and natural laws. In his system, the love of man is not the pride of a father in his son, of a citizen in his friend, but the reverence and affection which we owe to each other as sons of God.

The Jew is our brother; the Moslem is our brother. We have all Abraham to our father: an Arab in the flesh, a Frank in the spirit. We bow to one and the same God. Is it a dream to imagine that a time may come when all these children of Jehovah shall be gathered into one fold?

The earth belongs to them even now. Divided by sects and weakened by wars, they are still the sole worshippers who live and thrive, who make conquests over nature and over men. The sea is theirs; nearly all the land is theirs.

In them beats the brain of the world. How are they to become united in a common spiritual bond? How but in God's own way—by the exercise of charity, by the magnetism of love? In war, the strong subdue the weak; but in morals and in faith, it is the just who subjugate the frail.

THE END.

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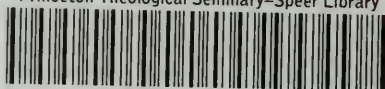
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